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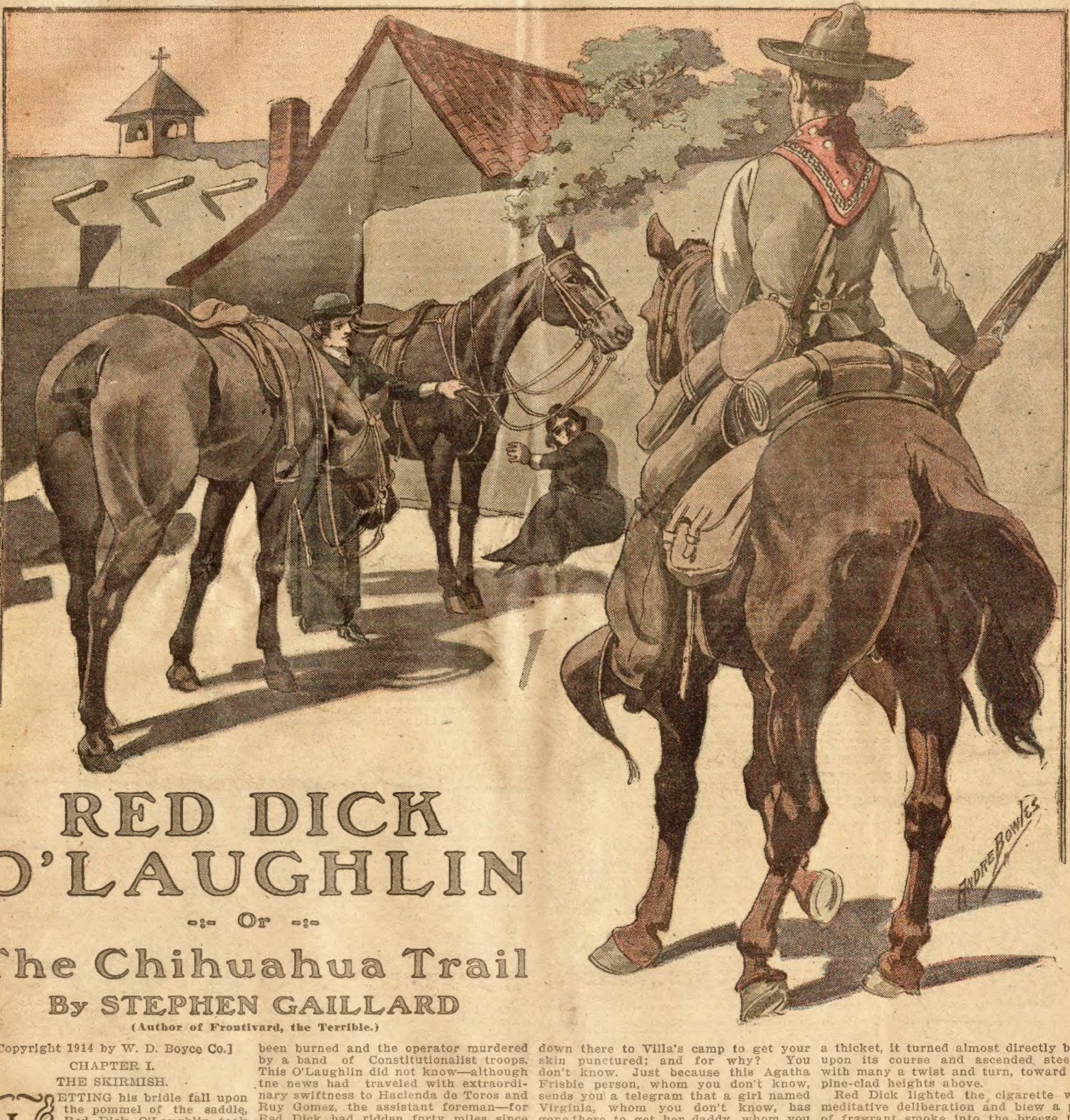

RED DICK O'LAUGHLIN

Or

The Chihuahua Trail

By STEPHEN GAILLARD

(Author of Frontivard, the Terrible.)

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CHAPTER I.

THE SKIRMISH.

LETTING his bridle fall upon the pommel of the saddle, Red Dick O'Laughlin took a crumpled bit of paper from his pocket, unfolded it, and read, for perhaps the twentieth time:

"Richard O'Laughlin,
"Hacienda de Toros,
"Chihuahua, Mexico:
"Virginia gone to Villa's camp to intercede for her father. Does not realize danger. In Heaven's name, find her and rescue her.
"AGATHA FRISBIE."

The paper—a telegram—had been delivered at the Hacienda de Toros that morning from the telegraph office, twenty miles away, thanks, no doubt, to the fact that Edwards, the operator, was an American. Only two hours after the telegram had been received and forwarded to its destination the office had been burned and the operator murdered by a band of Constitutionalist troops. This O'Laughlin did not know—although the news had traveled with extraordinary swiftness to Hacienda de Toros and Ruy Gomez, the assistant foreman—for Red Dick had ridden forty miles since morning.

As he perused the crumpled telegram the forehead of the red-bronze giant in the saddle became furrowed with lines expressive of the deepest perplexity, and lifting the sombrero from his head he ran his fingers through a shock of hair so red it really seemed a wonder they were not scorched.

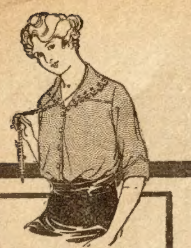
"Now, who in the name of all the devils in Mexico, and there are plenty of them," he muttered, "is Virginia? And who is Agatha Frisbie? And why me for the rescue stunt? Dick," he went on, after a reflective pause, letting the hand that held the hat fall upon the horn of the saddle as he turned sideways and looked across at the opposite wall of the canyon, as if, perchance, expecting to find there an answer to his queries, "you're an awful fool. You're going down there to Villa's camp to get your skin punctured; and for why? You don't know. Just because this Agatha Frisbie person, whom you don't know, sends you a telegram that a girl named Virginia, whom you don't know, has gone there to get her daddy, whom you don't know, out of limbo. Now isn't that a fool's errand? I say, isn't it? And just as like as not a blank wall and a firing party at the end of it." And by way of taking the matter under consideration, Red Dick rolled a cigarette.

Above him, five hundred feet or more, towered the precipitous wall of the canyon, up which zigzagged the narrow trail, winding in and out among clumps of stunted pines which seemed to cling to, rather than grow in, the niches and crevices of the declivity; while at an equal distance below, a mountain stream brawled turbulently among the rocks and trees at the bottom of the chasm, now purple in shadow, though the sun was still two hours high. At the spot where he had halted the trail ran straight along the face of the precipice for thirty yards or more, until, entering a thicket, it turned almost directly back upon its course and ascended steeply, with many a twist and turn, toward the pine-clad heights above.

Red Dick lighted the cigarette with meditative deliberation and blew a puff of fragrant smoke into the breeze that blew down the canyon. His horse, a rawboned, wiry-looking sorrel, suddenly turned his head and whinnied. "What now, Dan?" said his master, "what's in the wind?" and turning in the saddle he looked back along the purple depths of the gorge. A rifle cracked in the shadowy depths below, and with a wicked "zing—g" a bullet cut the air in front of Red Dick's face, so close that it took the cigarette from between his very lips.

To turn in the saddle and touch the sorrel with the spur, giving vent as he did to a Spanish expletive that would hardly look well in print, were for Red Dick the acts of a moment; and, as it seemed, in a single bound, horse and rider had reached the thicket of stunted

(Continued on page three.)



Important Reduction

MARY JANE—An extremely practical, yet smart-looking waist. Made with the popular yoke in front. Has V neck, elbow length sleeves, turn-up cuffs. The whole waist is stitched in white, giving a well-finished appearance. Turn-over collar of the material embroidered in white. In light blue Chambray, black Madras or white Madras. Launders beautifully. Sizes 32 to 46. State size and color. An exceptionally low price and the usual Charles William value.
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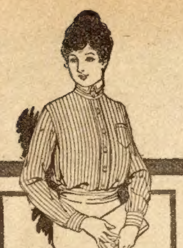

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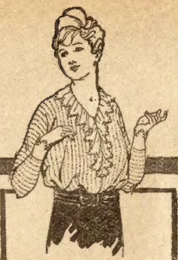

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THE ALICE—A charming blouse of soft, silky Corded Crepe. The low neck is encircled with a soft white Crepe frill, scalloped in silk to match blouse. The sleeves are full length and finished with ruffle. Drop shoulder arm hole. Generous and full. This is but one of thousands of Charles William wonderful values. Lavender, light blue or white. Sizes 32 to 44. State color and size.
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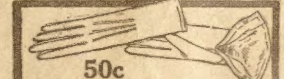
Our 370-page book of New York Styles illustrates thousands of special styles made exclusively for us at equally great savings. A wonderful variety! No matter what style book you get, don't miss seeing this one. Send for it today.



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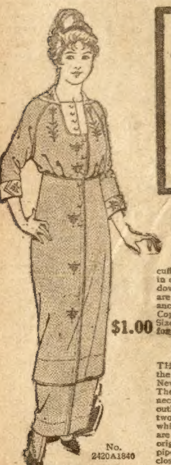
Fine quality suede (undressed kid) velvety finish; seams stitched in silk; a regular 98c value—never before sold for 50c. Either unlined or lined with fancy fleeced cloth. Reindeer tan or medium gray. Sizes 5½ to 8½. State color, size and whether lined or unlined.
No. 2220A3332. Prepaid Price, **50c**



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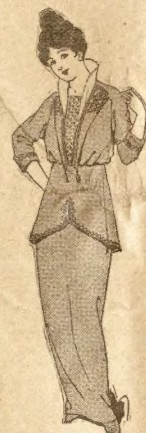
Linene Dress—$1

THE GLORIA—Of excellent quality of Linene. Made with the Russian tunic effect. The collar of white pique finishes in front in a unique and unusual yoke arrangement. The three-quarter length raglan sleeves, finished with cuffs of white pique. The cuffs and collar are embroidered in color to match the dress. The dress itself is embroidered down the front in white. The sleeves, waistline and tunic are piped in white, giving the dress a well-finished appearance. Convenient front closing, with ten pearl buttons. Copenhagen blue, lavender and tan. Skirt about 2 yards wide. Sizes 32 to 46 in. bust. Give size and color. No. 2420A1840.
$1.00 for this $1.50 dress.



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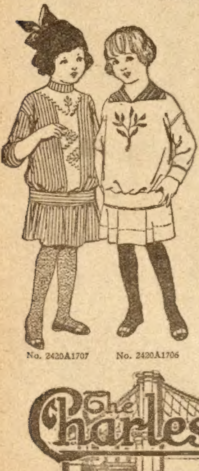
THE METROPOLITAN—A very smart-looking dress of the always fashionable black and white shepherd check. New kimono sleeves, three-quarter length, turned-up cuff. The skirt is made with a rounded peplum. The square neck vest of allover lace, backed by soft white crepe, is outlined with graduated revers of the check, ending with two black silk tassels. Notice the roll collar of crisp, white Organdie. The peplum, the cuffs and the revers are edged with black soutache braid, finishing in a very original and dainty ornamental design. The waistline is piped with black braid and is slightly raised. Invisible side closing. In black and white check only. Skirt about 2 yards wide. Sizes 32 to 46 in. bust. Also Misses 14—16—18 years. Give size. No. 2420A1610. A $2.00 dress prepaid, **$1.00**



No. 2420A1707 No. 2420A1706

This Lovely Frock only 49c

THE LITTLE LADY—Dress of striped Percale. Long shoulder; three-quarter sleeves finished in turned-up cuffs piped in contrasting color. Wide belt also piped. Smart vest effect of white gingham relieved by two tabs of color, scalloped and daintily embroidered in white; quaint yoke; 2-in. hem. Buttons down back under a fly. May be had striped in tango or blue, with the trimming, embroidery and piping to match. Sizes 6 to 14 years. Give size and color. No. 2420A1707. 75c dress prepaid, **49c**

A Typical Charles William Value—49c

THE WINSOME MAID—Dress of serviceable Percale. V neck finished with turned-over collar of the new Roman striped material. Belt and cuffs piped in the Roman stripe. Front is embroidered with a beautiful design in the exquisite Roman colors. Skirt has large box plait, and deep hem allows room for lengthening. Buttons down the back and opens flat, making it easy to iron. Tan or Copenhagen blue, sizes 6 to 14 years. State size and color.
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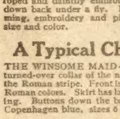

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How To Make Your Money Buy More

A $23.50 DRESS FOR $15.85

By Mrs. Elizabeth Davis Brown

PENNSYLVANIA STATION
OVER 200,000 PEOPLE VISIT NEW YORK EVERY DAY TO SHOP AND TO SEE THE SIGHTS OF THE CITY

A woman in P——, New Jersey, saw just the dress she wanted at her retail store for $23.50. At a neighbor's, she saw the Charles William Stores Fashion Book. From it, she got exactly the same dress for $15.85. With the $7.65 saved, she got a hat for $4.50 and a pair of shoes for $3.

Thus, with the same amount she got dress, hat and shoes for what she would have had to pay the retail dealer for the dress alone.

City women used to have all the advantage over women living in smaller towns or in the country. At the Clearance Sales, at the end of each season, they could get articles of all kinds at big reductions. At these sales, the stores were so crowded you almost had to fight your way in. If it were possible to sell at such prices at the end of the season, why couldn't it be done at the beginning, when the styles were new and women wanted them most?

This is just what the Charles William Stores do. Women everywhere can now get New York styles *now*, when they want them, and actually for less.

At last the variety you want

Under one roof, all the Charles William Stores are grouped together. The Charles William Dress Store, Waist Store, Millinery Store, The Charles William Children's Outfitting Store, The Charles William Shoe Store, etc. Together they carry complete lines of a *hundred and twenty-five thousand different* articles.

In one store alone, they carry a stock that would take six continuous city blocks of stores to display.

You can imagine what a variety this gives *you* to choose from.

Two profits done away with— *You* get the saving

All of this merchandise they buy direct from *factories* and sell to you at less than the retail store *pays* for its merchandise.

The thousands of factories know that when they have fine new merchandise they can sell to the Charles William Stores in vast quantities *for cash*. This is why they are willing to sell at prices much lower than they regularly sell to wholesalers, who in turn must add *their* profit and expense to sell to the retail stores. And the retailers must add their profits and expense to sell to you.

A GLIMPSE OF FIFTH AVENUE, WHERE THE SMARTEST DRESSING IN AMERICA IS SEEN. MRS. VANDERBILT'S TOWN HOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND.

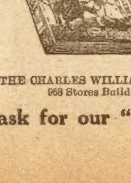
The most progressive merchants come to New York from every State in the Union to buy the merchandise they sell to you. And that's where the story comes in.

Promptly delivered at *your* door

On whatever you intend to buy, for yourself, husband or brother, the boys or girls, or little folks, you will find the savings just as great as on the dress goods mentioned, and everything will be *delivered free to your door*. If for any reason you shouldn't like them, the Charles William Stores *want* you to return them, and your money will be refunded in full, together with any express or parcels post charges you pay.

Send for whatever style you want; try it on; if you aren't perfectly satisfied, return it at the expense of the Charles William Stores; for pleased customers is what the business is founded upon.

It is the unsolicited testimony like that of the woman in P——, New Jersey, who saved $7.65 on a dress alone, that has made so many women want the Charles William Stores Fashion Book each season that the postage stamps alone for sending it out cost over half a million dollars a year. Write today for your copy of the fall issue—NEW YORK STYLES it is called—and see how many more things your money will buy this fall and how much better style and quality they'll be. Write today to



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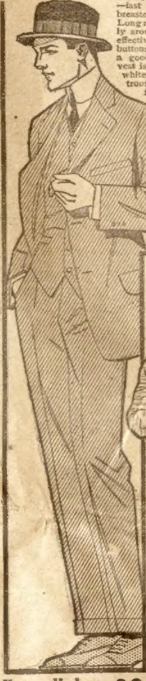
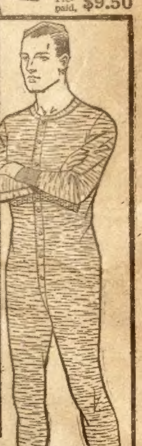
Get acquainted with the Charles William Stores *now* by reading the offers made here. Thousands of other money-saving opportunities are illustrated and described in our book of *New York Styles*. Write for it now and see how much you save on a suit, overcoat, underwear, gloves, socks and other wearing apparel for yourself or boy. Order goods from this column—your money back quick if not perfectly satisfied with your purchase.

A typical Charles William value at $9.50



Men's Suit of fine quality blue serge—fast color. Three-button single breasted coat, stylishly becoming. Long roll lapels. The collar fits snugly around the neck. The sleeves effectively trimmed with three small buttons. Lined throughout with a good black sateen. The smart vest is cut high and has the new white silk corded edge. The trousers are conservatively cut and finished to the smallest detail. The horizontal trouser pockets are finished with buttoned-over laps. This model was made especially for the Charles William Stores by a leading New York clothier who is responsible for its faultless fit and distinctive appearance. In blue only. State size. Sizes 32-44. No. 420A6054. Prepaid, **$9.50**



Unequalled anywhere at this price 98c

Men's Sanitary Fleece Lined Union Suit—very warm and soft. Has high neck, full length sleeves and is ankle length. The knitted wrist and ankles fit snugly and will not get loose after the suit has been worn a short time. The seat buttons over at one side making the garment fit smoothly, but allowing plenty of room for free movement of the body. This suit will outwear two of ordinary underwear and will give splendid service until worn out. Random color. Sizes 34 to 46 chest. State size. No. 1520A1914. Prepaid **98c**

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Men's Silk Lisle Socks made of best quality mercerized lisle yarn. Very fine gauge. Medium light in weight. These socks have long elastic ribbed tops, shaped legs and full seamless feet. Double soles, heels and toes. The heels are high spliced. Fast, stainless dye. These socks are a Charles William Special and are sure to please you immensely. Sizes 9½ to 11½, inclusive, in half sizes. State size. No. 1520A514 Tan, No. 1520A516 Black, Pair, prepaid, **23c**

A genuine saving at 90c

Men's fine quality gloves of Mocha Suede, lined thruout with Fleeced Knitted lining of Angora Wool. Back neatly stitched in silk. One-button snap clasp. Half outseam sewn. Built for comfort and good wear and combines warmth with lightweight. Regular $1.25 value. Sure to please you in every detail of style, quality and value. Sizes 7½ to 10½, in half sizes. State size.
2220A1492 Tan
2220A1493 Gray
Prepaid, **90c**

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125 pages of men's and young men's gloves, socks, clothing; 20 pages of boys' apparel; 10 pages of baby goods; 175 pages of women's apparel. You ought to have this great FREE fashion book. Write *now*. Mail coupon at left or use a postal.

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Red Dick O'Laughlin

(Continued from page one.)

pines into which the trail disappeared, while a scattering volley from below sent the bullets zip-zipping among the rocks about them, and the cliffs on either hand answered with a thousand angry voices the cracking of the rifles. Leaping to the ground the moment he gained the shelter of the trees, Red Dick slapped the sorrel's foreleg and instantly "Dan" —"Devil Dan" was his full, and not altogether inappropriate, cognomen—dropped prone upon the trail; while his master, Winchester in hand, crawled through the pines to a point which commanded a clear view of the bottom of the gorge. There he saw the barrels of half a dozen Mauser rifles projecting above the top of a detached mass of rock, together with as many sombreros and such portions of their owners' anatomies as it was necessary for them to expose in order to search the thicket with a well meant but ineffectual fire.

Red Dick made no comment—he was a silent man in action—but settling himself comfortably behind a projecting rock he added the deeper note of his Winchester to the sharp staccato of the Mausers. At the first report of the Winchester a sombrero went spinning into the stream behind the hidden riflemen; at the second, a yell of pain mingled with the echoing voices of rifles, and a Mauser fell clattering behind the rock; at the third, a swarthy form leaped into the air, and, falling, rolled to the very verge of the torrent and lay still; then Red Dick ceased firing. He was a careful man and declined to waste ammunition upon a bare rock. Not so much as the peak of a sombrero or the tip of a Mauser barrel was in sight.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRAP.

RED DICK took advantage of the lull in the proceedings occasioned by the discretion of his opponents to look about him, first up at the trail where it zigzagged toward the top of the cliff, in all too plain view from below, then down at the bottom of the gorge where lurked his hidden enemies. For the moment his situation was satisfactory enough. For his opponents to climb up the face of the cliff to where he lay would have been impossible, even had they been unopposed; while to reach the lower end of the trail more than a mile east of Red Dick's position, they would have to expose themselves upon leaving the shelter of the rock behind which they lay; and not only that, for during two-thirds of the ascent they would also have to encounter the fire of an expert rifleman who had every advantage of position in his favor. The red-bronze giant, however, was not deceived by his seeming advantage. He remembered that the rising of the full moon would follow the setting of the sun so closely that there would be no interval of darkness during which he might make his way to the top of the cliff under cover of the friendly shadows. With a picturesque oath he noted also that owing to the trend of the canyon eastward it would be flooded by the very first rays of the rising moon. With his enemies lay the advantage of the darkness that would envelop the bottom of the gorge upon the setting of the sun; they had water, they probably had food in plenty, they had numbers on their side. It looked as if Red Dick would have to stand a siege until moonset at the very least, and even then, if his enemies should open fire the ascent to the top of the cliff would be desperately perilous. Besides, they might be re-enforced, and then——

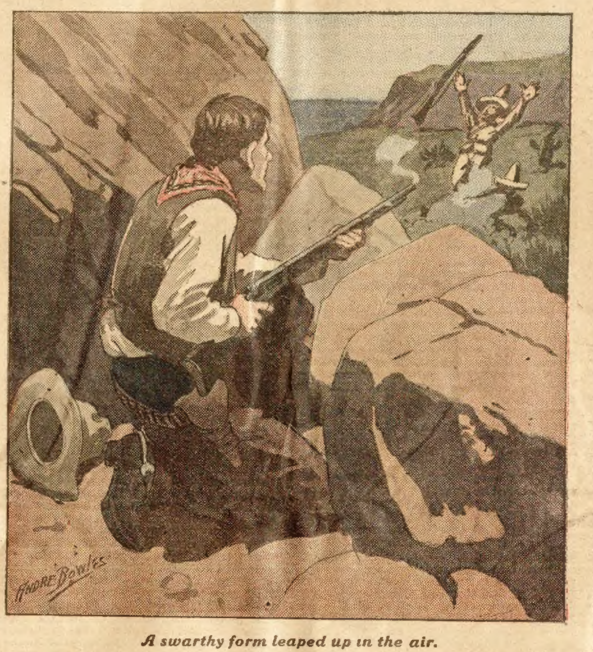
Red Dick crawled back through the pines to where the sorrel still lay prone upon the trail. Devil Dan was a veteran, and would have lain quiet through a much hotter scrimmage than the one in which his master had just been engaged.

O'Laughlin patted the sorrel's neck. The horse raised his head and regarded his master with a look of dumb inquiry. "They've got us in a tight corner, Dan, old boy," said Red Dick, "but we've been in tighter ones, eh laddie? You just lie quiet while I crawl back on the trail a ways, and see if I can spot any friends that bunch of greasers may have hereabouts." Devil Dan lay back again upon the ground as if he understood perfectly, as no doubt he did.

His master crawled back along the trail until he reached the edge of the pines. From that point the bottom of the canyon was in plain view for nearly a mile westward. Cautiously parting the branches of the thicket, Red Dick gave vent to a low, guarded whistle. About half a mile away a troop of perhaps fifty horsemen were halted in the shelter of a clump of pines. One of their number had ridden out in the open and was signaling with his sombrero, no doubt to the men behind the rock with whom Red Dick had been engaged. Behind the horsemen, to the westward, straggled a long, motley, ragged column—men, women, children—on foot, on horseback, on muleback, with here and there pack horses and mules loaded, apparently, to the utmost of their strength. The column halted, and those on foot had flung themselves on the ground as if utterly exhausted. Some few were filling canteens and water bottles from the stream; all looked wayworn, weary, ragged.

"By cracky! It's an army," muttered Red Dick. "Federals, too, by the look of them. Villa must be in Chihuahua, and these must be the troops of Mercado, Salazar and Orozco, retreating upon Ojinaga. Savage as hornets, too, probably, and ready to take it out on any stray gringoes they may meet." He rolled a cigarette and lighted it cautiously. "This is no place for you, my son," he went on, reflectively. "You're a nervy fellow and a good shot, but you can't fight an army." He looked down again at the straggling column, then up at the towering cliffs. "Gosh! I wish Dan would sprout wings, seeing that I'm not likely to, either here or hereafter; and if I don't get out of this pretty quick my only chance will be in the hereafter I'm thinking." And he crawled back to where the sorrel lay.

Beyond the spot where Devil Dan lay, stretched out as quietly as if he never meant to get up again, the thicket became more dense, so dense, indeed, as to suggest the presence of water somewhere in its recesses. So thought O'Laughlin, as he returned from an unsatisfactory survey of his upward road, rugged and dangerous at best, but now quite impossible under the rifle fire to which he would be exposed the moment he showed himself. Turning aside from the trail, he parted the branches of the low, thick-standing pines. At the first step he stumbled and would have fallen headlong had he not caught a stout branch as he plunged forward. As it was he descended a steep bank with rather more speed than comfort, and found himself in the bottom of a small hollow, formed by the opening of a crevasse in the side of the cliff. In the middle of the hollow was a spring of clear water which welled up from under the rocky wall of the crevasse. The sight of the water was most welcome, how welcome only a dweller upon arid plains can know; but, nevertheless, the crevasse claimed Red Dick's whole attention for the moment.



A swarthy form leaped up in the air.

Ascending at an angle of about forty-five degrees, it formed a deep and narrow trough in the side of the cliff. About a hundred feet above where O'Laughlin stood the view was obstructed by an overhanging mass of rock beneath which the crevasse appeared to bend to the right. To scramble up that hundred feet was for the hardy plainsman the work of an instant. From the mass of overhanging rock the sunken way ran to the right, almost level for about fifty feet, at the end of which, turning to the left again, it ascended at an easy angle to the very top of the cliff. Red Dick could scarcely restrain a shout of joy. "Out of limbo, by thunder!" he exclaimed; and turning, made his way down the crevasse as fast as he dared and back to where the sorrel lay.

Twenty minutes later he led Devil Dan out among the pines that crowned the plateau above the canyon.

CHAPTER III.

SCOUTING BY MOONLIGHT.

AN HOUR later Red Dick, one arm thrown over Devil Dan's neck, stood looking down upon the plain that stretched away eastward from the foot of the basalt cliffs to the purple sierra behind which the red disk of the setting sun was disappearing. But O'Laughlin's gaze was not upon the setting sun, or the purple sierra; instead, it rested upon a long, straggling column making its way slowly, wearily across the plain. The head of the column stretched a mile to the eastward, and the grotesque shadows of footsore men—and women and children not a few—and stumbling horses were flung across the arid waste, as it seemed, almost at the very foot of the sierra; the rear of the column had not yet emerged from the mouth of the canyon, half a mile north of where O'Laughlin stood, from which still poured straggling, detached groups in the wake of the better mounted leaders. Despite the slow progress that they made there was among the fugitives—for it was indeed Mercado's retreating army—an air of feverish, futile haste, that yet seemed to defeat its own object, a something of panic terror that overcame hunger, thirst, deadly fatigue, as if the desert held no danger so great as that from which they fled. Horses stumbled and fell, only to be pulled to their feet and urged on again by riders who reeled in their saddles, or else to be left where they lay, a prey to the vulture and coyote; men and women sank down in the scanty shade of mesquite and cactus, only to rise again, urged on by fear, and stumble wearily forward.

"Poor devils!" muttered Red Dick. "Butcher Villa has got Chihuahua, that's sure, and his cavalry is probably hot upon their trail. It's a fine chance they've got of reaching Ojinaga. But you've got troubles of your own, my son," he said presently. "You've got to go down there to Chihuahua—and that's fifty miles of hard riding—to rescue a girl you don't know from you don't know what danger, though if you couldn't make a pretty good guess you wouldn't have ridden forty miles since morning and be headed for the biggest bunch of trouble you've ever tackled." He rolled the inevitable cigarette, lighted it, and then went on, patting the sorrel's neck and looking at him whimsically. "Your master's a big fool, Dan, an awfully big fool; he knows that Pancho Villa has reasons for wanting to get him into his power, he knows that his life won't be worth a plugged peso in the Butcher's camp, and yet he is going to ride straight into that camp to —to—oh, well, he'd probably have sent a couple of hundred of his cutthroats after me sooner or later, anyway, and then the boys at the hacienda would have put up a fight, and a lot of them got killed on my account; so maybe it is better as it is. Come on, Dan, old boy," and swinging into the saddle he turned the sorrel's head southwestward among the pines.

The moon had risen as the sun had set behind the sierras, and twilight had faded into moonlight ere Red Dick turned from the contemplation of Mercado's fugitive army. The pine woods, nowhere dense, soon became straggling, the continuous growth being broken into detached clumps of trees with wide spaces of open ground between, save where thickets of cactus and mesquite intervened and cast fantastic shadows. The surface of the plateau was broken by frequent shallow ravines between low, rocky ridges trending in a general direction from north to south. Along the side of one of these ridges O'Laughlin guided the sorrel, keeping well below the skyline, while at the same time riding high enough to overlook the country beyond. Suddenly the sorrel pricked up his ears and whinnied softly. From off to the northward somewhere came the long drawn howl of a coyote. "What now, Dan?" asked his master. "You're not getting afraid of coyotes, are you?" Then something on the other side of the ridge arrested his attention, some sight or sound that eyes or ears less keen would have passed unnoted, and he drew rein. "The devil! more neighbors, and not coyotes, either," he muttered, as he swung out of the saddle. "You keep quiet, Dan," he said softly. "We've no need of company this pleasant evening," and crawling to the crest of the ridge, where a convenient bowlder afforded good cover, he looked down upon the country beyond.

Below the ridge the level plain stretched away to the south and west, traversed by a broad trail gleaming white in the moonlight and winding in and out among the thickets. Half a mile to the southward it skirted the ridge upon the top of which O'Laughlin lay, where it turned sharply to the west, hiding from view the country which lay beyond. For a few brief moments Red Dick scanned the level ground immediately below him with a keen glance, then turning his gaze to the northward he crawled close into the shadow of the bowlder, and lying prone, swung forward his Winchester and waited expectantly. Could any one have witnessed his actions they would have been mystified, that is, unless their senses had been as keen as the plainsman's, for there was absolutely no living creature to be seen upon the plain or upon the trail; but to Red Dick's keen ears, nevertheless, came the sound of a muffled tramping, and presently from behind a clump of pines two horsemen emerged into the bright moonlight, riding slowly, carbine at knee, scanning every bush and tree on either hand with threatenening watchfulness. They passed perhaps two hundred yards from where the plainsman lay, evidently quite unconscious of his espionage; while behind them, with rhythmic beat of iron hoofs, a handful of horsemen—perhaps sixty troopers in all—came winding along the trail.

"Now, who the devil may that bunch be, I wonder," muttered Red Dick, raising himself on one elbow the better to watch them. "None of Mercado's men, that's sure; believe me, none of them are heading back toward Chihuahua, or else I don't know panic when I see it. Not Constitutionalists, either; they'd be hitting the trail the other way, too; which leaves one more guess, and I reckon that's the right one—just plain bandits. Humph! not much to pick from, Federal, Constitutionalist, or bandit—the name's about the only difference. Those fellows somehow look familiar, too; not that I'm going down to claim acquaintance with them; no, hardly; but as they seem to be going my way, I guess I'll keep them in sight for a bit." And rising cautiously from behind the bowlder he descended to where the sorrel stood waiting.

Riding along the northern declivity of the ridge, his head just level with the skyline, Red Dick pursued a course parallel with that which the horsemen were following. At the point where the ridge turned southward, the ravine of which it had formed the southern side opened into the plain. Across the plain, less than a quarter of a mile distant, rose a low, rocky hill crowned by adobe walls and red-tiled roofs gleaming in the moonlight. A broad trail wound down the hillside and across the level ground, ascending the ridge at a point half a mile or less to the westward. In that direction the horsemen had disappeared.

Red Dick rode down into the plain, heading toward the trail, but keeping as close as possible within the shadow of the ridge. He had not broken his fast since leaving the Hacienda de Toros that morning, and the pangs of hunger tempted him to seek food and shelter for the night in the little town upon the hill; on the other hand, it was extremely doubtful whether its inhabitants would prove friendly, especially to a wandering gringo. It was not at all unlikely even, in the harried state of the country, to turn out to be a stronghold of banditti, perhaps of the very band he had been scouting. Therefore, when he reached the trail he paused, irresolute. A supperless couch beneath a clump of pines, with perhaps a rattlesnake for bedfellow before morning, was not an alluring prospect; on the other hand, he knew that the chances of a hostile reception in the town were about as ten to one. So he sat in the saddle, his tall form silhouetted against the moonlit plain, undecided whether to accept the certainty of hunger for himself and the sorrel, or to take a chance for food and shelter for both. As the event proved, however, the decision was not to rest with himself.

Suddenly over the top of the ridge, scarce a hundred yards away, came a clatter of horses' hoofs, and a ringing shout, followed by a volley of pistol shots told him he had been discovered. Wheeling the sorrel in the trail, he dashed at full gallop across the plain toward the town, while behind him thundered the sounds of pursuit. Tha pursuers fired as they rode, and a dozen bullets kicked up the dust upon the trail uncomfortably close to Devil Dan's flying hoofs. The sorrel was stanch and hardy; he would travel hard all day over the roughest kind of country, and do his best at the end of the road. Well mounted as they evidently were, the pursuers could not gain. Red Dick glanced back over his shoulder. Two of the pursuing horsemen, galloping at breakneck speed, were far in advance of the rest, less than a hundred yards behind him. Drawing his revolver, he turned in the saddle and fired three times without slackening speed. One of the horses plunged forward and fell, staggered to his feet and fell again, the other came on for fifty yards or more, his steady gallop unbroken, then suddenly collapsed in a heap upon the trail. His rider, disengaging himself from the falling horse with marvelous dexterity, emptied his revolver at Red Dick, one of the bullets grazing the arm of the fleeing man, another passing through his hat. "Good shooting, Amigo!" shouted the red-bronze giant, with a laugh, as he dashed on, "but not quite good enough!" And turning forward again in the saddle, hé saw the adobe walls and red-tiled roofs towering above him on the height.

"D—n queer," he muttered, "that all this racket hasn't waked the greasers up!"

Behind him the sounds of pursuit suddenly ceased, and wheeling Devil Dan around, he saw that his pursuers, having remounted their comrades whose horses had been killed, were riding back toward the ridge the way they had come.

"Humph! Evidently no friends of theirs live up yonder," remarked Red Dick, and began to roll a cigarette. "Dan," my boy," he went on, turning once more to survey the white walls above him, "we've taken some long chances today, and I reckon we'll take another," and he urged the sorrel up along the trail leading to the town..

CHAPTER IV.

SANTIAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS.

THE brilliant moonlight, shining down through the clear, dry desert air, made of the little town of Santiago de los Caballeros a vivid dream picture in dazzling contrasts of black and white—white walls, black shadows, with an overtone of gleaming, red-tiled roofs that shone like blood-splashed gold. Judged by its name it should have been a metropolis—a dream metropolis in the eerie moonlight—but in reality, and when viewed in the sordid light of day, it was a squalid collection of narrow, dirty streets radiating from a central plaza, and desperately crowded for room on the cramped area of the hilltop.

Red Dick learned the imposing name of the adobe grandeur by which he was surrounded from a bronze tablet on a fountain in the plaza, which also informed the uninitiated that the said fountain had been presented to the municipality by Senor Ynez Hurtado, its most eminent citizen. He did not even grin at the high-sounding name, being used to Spanish-American nomenclature, but he did speculate somewhat upon the whereabouts of the citizens, eminent and otherwise, for the place was deserted.

Devil Dan lifted his wet muzzle from the cool water of the fountain, in which his master had already quenched his thirst, tossed his head, and looked about him, as if he, too, were wondering at the place's emptiness of human life. Evidences of fire and rapine were not wanting to explain it. What had once been a pretentious mansion on one side of the plaza, perhaps that of Hurtado, the donor of the fountain, was now a ruin of fire-blackened walls; the church which faced it had shared a similar fate, the roof and a portion of the walls having fallen in, leaving a gaunt skeleton of what had once been a holy place; all of the few shops and many other houses—chiefly those the size and architecture of which indicated some degree of wealth on the part of their owners—had been burned—and sacked no doubt. Still, that so considerable a place should have been harried to such a degree as to induce its inhabitants to desert it en masse, was remarkable. To Red Dick, who had seated himself upon the coping of the fountain to consider the matter, it seemed uncanny. Presently, however, the pangs of hunger obtruded themselves insistently upon his reflections, and rising, he went foraging among the houses that faced the plaza. The results were meager enough—a bag of dried beans, of which he gave the sorrel the greater part, reserving only a few handfuls for himself.

As he sat munching them, with a great deal less relish than Devil Dan exhibited about the same business, the long drawn howl of a coyote arose somewhere in the deserted environs, and went echoing among the empty houses. It was answered by a wail from one of the streets leading from the plaza. O'Laughlin sprang to his feet. That was no wolf's howl that went quavering through the chill night air, it was the voice of a human being—and a woman. Swinging into the saddle, he rode across the plaza. As he paused at the farther side uncertain, not knowing from which of several streets the sound had come, he heard it again, lower this time, but unmistakably human, unmistakably feminine. It came from a narrow, winding street flanked on one side by the garden wall of a mansion which had been burned, and on the other by squalid hovels. Red Dick rode forward wondering. In that wailing voice there was something that spoke to him of home—of God's country.

He came presently to the end of the garden wall behind which was another narrow street—alley rather—which intersected the one upon which he was riding. Upon turning the corner this was what he saw:

In the middle of the street two tired-looking horses; while crouching against the wall of the garden in the bright moonlight was a woman, her attitude expressive of utter exhaustion or utter terror, or perhaps both; beside the crouching form stood another woman, a tall, lithe figure, a hunting crop in one hand, the bridle of one of the horses in the other, her features shadowed by a Mexican sombrero. The hat was the only thing bizarre about her attire, for the trim, perfectly fitting riding habit and the dainty boot which peeped out from beneath it would have been sufficiently conventional on Fifth avenue. On Fifth avenue, yes, but here, in this empty, war-harried town, in the brilliant moonlight of the semi-tropical night, conventionality itself became bizarre. Red Dick reined in the sorrel and fairly gasped with astonishment. "Well, I'll be——" he caught himself just in time to check the vivid expletive that trembled on his tongue.

"But Nancy," the standing woman was saying, "if you give way so we are utterly undone. I know I have been a headstrong fool, I know this empty place is horrible, and I am just as much afraid of wolves as you are, but—Ah! Good heavens!" Red Dick and the sorrel, having turned the corner, emerged from the shadows. The sand of the unpaved street had deadened the sound of the light-stepping sorrel's hoofs, and the two women had not heard them coming. A dismal shriek from the crouching woman greeted O'Laughlin's appearance, her companion stepped back and gripped more tightly the bridle of the horse she was holding.

"Who are you?" she said, raising her head so that the moonlight shone on a face of dazzling beauty. An artist would have raved over its classic contour, a physiognomist might have moralized upon the extreme willfulness and hauteur her features expressed. Red Dick did neither.

"Well, for the love of Pete!" he said, towering above her in the saddle. "How in the name of all the saints in Mexico did you get here?" (He thought "devils," but substituted saints.)

"Ah!" exclaimed the girl, "thank God you're an American."

"True bill," assented Red Dick, "at least in some sort, though it's twenty years since I saw God's country. But you—where did you come from? What are you doing here?"

The woman crouching by the wall raised a tear-stained face in the moonlight. Evidently Red Dick's appearance did not reassure her. "Oh, Miss Jennie, Miss Jennie!" she wailed, "He's one of them awful bandits, I'm sure he is! Don't you have nothing to do with him, don't you!"

Indeed Red Dick's appearance could hardly be termed prepossessing, more especially to two women who had evidently but recently left the civilization and refinement of cities. To them his costume, had they seen it upon the stage, would have seemed picturesque, but under the present circumstances it was merely outlandish, as, no doubt, everything else south of the Rio Grande had seemed to them; besides, he was dusty and travel-stained from the peak of his sombrero to the soles of his heavy boots, which did not improve the appearance of garments which had been new in some remote past. More than all, perhaps, Red Dick's face was by no means handsome, and the eyes of fear or suspicion might easily have distorted the resolute hardihood of its expression into ruffian dare-deviltry.

The girl whom her companion had addressed as "Miss Jennie" was evidently impressed by her companion's fears. The look of relief which had overspread her face upon hearing O'Laughlin's English speech gave way to one of misgiving. "We are lost," she said in answer to his question, "and I really do not know how we found this place. We started from Juarez yesterday by train, with a pass from Colonel Chao, the Commandant there; the train broke down, and I hired four horses and two men to guide us to Chihuahua; when we were alone on the desert the men tried to make us prisoners, but we had the better horses—I saw that when we hired them—and outrode our pursuers, who were brutes enough to fire upon us, and no thanks to them that their aim was poor! But in escaping from them we lost all idea of where we were, and rode on aimlessly until we came to this place just after sunset As we approached it we were dreadfully frightened by hearing shots from somewhere beyond the town, and even more so when we found it apparently deserted. But you, sir, may I ask again who you are? It may be you are no better than the men we escaped from." And the girl edged nearer to the horse she was holding.

"Thanks," said the red-bronze giant, with a wry smile, "it's a good thing I'm not vain about my looks. Had anything to eat?"

"No," said the girl, "not since the train was wrecked this morning."

"Hungry?"

"Y-e-s, and—and—thirsty, too, dreadfully thirsty. This is a horrible country."

"Oh, the country's all right," said Red Dick, "the trouble's with the people, but if your friend there can ride a little way, and if you are not too much afraid of a red-headed bandit, I know where there's water and I've got some beans—not very inviting victuals, I'll admit, but better than nothing."

A few moments later the three rode up to the fountain in the plaza. The two women dismounted and their horses drank eagerly, though scarcely less so than they themselves, for they were nearly famished. Then Red Dick divided the remainder of the beans between the horses, reserving a handful each for the two women. Nancy, who was evidently her companion's maid, began to whimper. "Oh, Miss Jennie, I can't eat these things, indeed I can't! I thought it was baked beans the—the gentleman was talking about."

"Don't be stupid, Nancy," said her mistress. "How do you suppose they would get anything as civilized as baked beans in this benighted country?"

"But Miss Jennie, I'm so hungry," whimpered Nancy, "and I can't eat them, indeed I can't!"

"Then don't!" said her mistress impatiently. "As for me, I am so hungry I think I could eat nails if there was any nourishment in them." And she applied herself to the dried beans with Spartan determination.

"Evidently," thought Red Dick, seating himself ón the stone coping of the fountain, "I haven't made what might be called a hit with the ladies. The tall one's a brick though, nerve enough for a dozen greasers. I wonder who the devil she is anyway! Miss Jennie, Miss Jennie—" and the plainsman fell into a reverie, not noting the suspicious glances with which the two women regarded him. Nancy continued to whimper, but, nevertheless, inspired, no doubt, by her mistress' example, began to munch the dry beans heroically. Presently she leaned towards Miss Jennie and whispered: "Oh, Miss Jennie, let's try to get away! I don't like that awful man's looks. He's a bandit, I'm sure he is; he looks just like that awful desperado in the play you took me to see in San Antonio. Let's try to get away, do!"

"Don't be stupid, Nancy," said her mistress, casting, nevertheless, an apprehensive glance in Red Dick's direction. "We can't get away even if we want to. He'd overtake us on that sorrel of his in no time, or I'm no judge of horse flesh. Besides, he's an American, and surely he wouldn't harm two American women, even though he may be a bandit."

"Oh, Miss Jennie," persisted Nancy, half whimpering, "you're so venturesome! Wasn't that dreadful Stephen White, that the lady at the hotel in San Antonio was telling us about—the one they called 'El Coyote'—an American, too? And wasn't he just as dreadful as any Mexican? She said he used to torture men to make them tell where their money was, and carry off women to his mountain stronghold and all."

"Stuff and nonsense! I don't believe all the rubbish they tell about bad men down here," said Miss Jennie, nevertheless glancing around furtively to where O'Laughlin sat serenely unconscious of the dialogue of which he was the subject. "I'd wager there are worse in Baltimore or New York."

Notwithstanding her mistress' words Nancy saw that she had made an impression. Suddenly a new idea seemed to strike her, and she leaned forward eagerly. "I'll tell you what we'll do," she whispered, "you take his horse—he ain't looking—and I'll take yours, then if he tries to catch us, he'll have to ride mine, and she's completely done up; she couldn't carry the bulk of him a hundred yards."

Miss Jennie glanced quickly around again to where Red Dick sat. He wasn't looking; indeed, he appeared to be so completely absorbed in his reflections as to be oblivious of their presence. Certainly there was nothing alarming in his attitude, and yet he did as certainly look the part of all the bandits of Miss Jennie's acquaintance—gained through romantic plays and novels. The girl forgot that she had also read of heroes who looked as rough and ready as did this sixfoot-and-then-some plainsman. Had she seen him by daylight it might have made a difference, but as it was she turned to Nancy:

"You'll collapse the same as you did a while ago?"

"No I won't, honest to goodness, I won't. I didn't when we got away from those dreadful men today, did I? And they looked like cowards—you said they did—but this one ain't no coward, I'll bet. He looks like—like a regular devil."

"Come on, then. On tiptoe until we get to the horses."

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

Getting Results.

After the dinner dishes were done Mrs. Chumly came into the livingroom and sat down at the other side of the table. Chumly was deep in the evening paper.

"Fred," she began tentatively, "your Cousin Will is going to be married, and you'll have to have a new suit. I want you to look nice."

Chumly was surprised, and much interested in his cousin, but he knew the signs well enough to be cautious. "Why, that's a little bit sudden, isn't it? He was here to dinner with your own cousin Susie not more than three weeks ago, and he didn't say anything about it, at least not to me. Móre than that, he didn't look like a man who contemplated matrimony."

"Maybe he didn't know it himself then," returned Mrs. Chumly, "and anyway men are not especially given to noticing things. And such news is usually supposed to be a surprise, even when it isn't. Your best suit is really getting too shabby to wear to any place at all. You'll just have to stop at the tailor's and put in a rush order. The wedding is to take place just a week from next Wednesday."

Chumly snorted. "Gosh! that is in a hurry. I'll venture the woman is back of it—probably afraid he'll get away."

Mrs. Chumly flushed and seemed about to make a tart rejoinder, then evidently thought better of it and held her peace as Chumly continued: "You know very well that I have to make a big interest payment on the house this month, and my insurance policy is due for a premium payment week after next, and we've either got to have two new rear tires for the car or quit going out, and I for one can't afford any new clothes. And what's more"—he cast a suspicious glance at his wife—"we, I say we, can't afford any."

Mrs. Chumly assumed an injured air. "Now, Fred," she demurred, sweetly, "you know just as well as I do that you simply can't go in that old suit. They'd talk about it for the next fifty years. You just must get a new one."

"That's always the way," snapped Chumly glowering, "eternally after me to spend money. Do you think I'm made of it? Not more than a month ago you were hinting for a new dress, too. Well, I'll give in this once. I'll go and get the suit, but we'll have to scrimp to make up for it, I tell you. For instance, if I remember rightly, not one of my people has ever seen you in that gray silk thing you got for Mrs. Jimson's affair, so you won't have to spend anything. It is handsome, too. Thank the stars for that much."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" chirped Mrs. Chumly, running around the table to kiss her husband. "You're such an old dear, even if you do get a little bearish sometimes."

Chumly grinned and looked foolish; he was afraid of his wife when she acted thus. "I hope I can get something that will go nicely with your gray silk," he said, returning to what he meant to be the main point.

"But, Fred, my dear," objected Mrs. Chumly firmly. "I simply can't wear that gray silk. I can't do it at all—it's too old and too well known."

"It looks very well," explained Chumly, half hopelessly, "and as I said before, not one of my people has ever seen you with it on."

"But cousin Susan——" began Mrs. Chumly tragically.

"Cousin Susan!" he answered crisply. What in the name of common sense has she got to do with it?"

"Why, she was with me when I picked it out, and she's the one your cousin is going to marry."

Chumly was stricken dumb for an instant. "I might have known it," he grumbled as soon as he got his breath. "I might have expected something of the sort. I'll bet a dollar and a half you fixed up that wedding just so you might have a good excuse for demanding that very dress you asked for a month ago."

"Fred Chumly, you know very well I had nothing to do with those young people's getting engaged," retorted Mrs. Chumly. "If they decided to get married immediately after my having them here to dinner together, that is certainly no fault of mine. And, anyway, if your cousin Will proves to be just one-half as good a husband as some other members of his family I could mention, Susan ought to be thankful to me all the days of her life."

"Maybe you're right, after all," agreed Chumly, looking foolish again. "Go ahead and get your dress. But for heaven's sake be as light on the price as you possibly can."

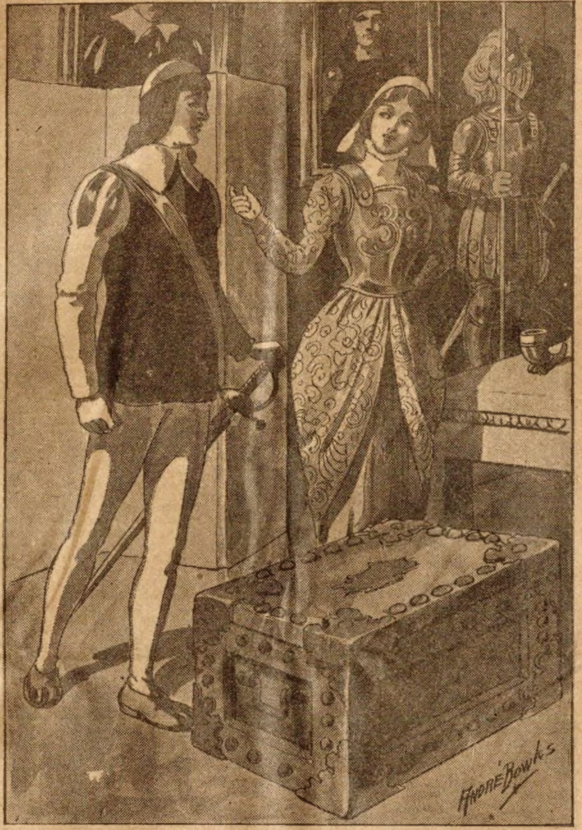
"Oh, it didn't cost much," cooed Mrs. Chumly happily, leaning over to kiss her victim on the bald spot, "and you're such a darling, I knew you wouldn't care, so I got Susan to go with me last week and pick out the very dress for the occasion. She has such excellent taste, and she seems to know just how to make the clerks do anything she wants them to do."

"Does she?" inquired Chumly, grimly, picking up the paper again. "Knows how to make people do as she wishes, eh? I guess it must run in the family. Poor Will—he doesn't know half as much as he will know some of these days."

The Purple Princess

Or, An Emperor's Last Love

By T. C. Harbaugh



"In yonder chest is gold."

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CHAPTER V.

THE SECRET TREASURE.

THE rage of the Emperor Francis when his messenger returned from Castle Marx was ungovernable.

"What!" he cried, paling to the gills. "A message like that from the Purple Princess? Art sure you heard aright?"

"The wind was in the right direction and my ears are good, your majesty."

Francis threw his tennis racket away and stamped on the ground in his fury.

"I will tame this mountain bird of paradise!" he hissed, and immediately sought the inner parts of the palace, where he summoned Count Soldan to his side.

"Get out the royal steed," he commanded. "Gather the Red Guard, and see that every one is in proper state. A moment, Count. I have had misgivings of late. You say you met the young imp of Coblenz?"

"We did and clipped his feathers."

"To his everlasting undoing?"

"It must be so. We left him on the field."

There was a dark scowl on the Emperor's brow.

"Some of these fellows have more lives than a cat," continued Francis. "If I thought you but scotched the snake——"

Soldan averted his gaze.

"Answer me!" roared Francis. "Tell me that you saw him dead in the moonlight."

"He fell prone to the ground at the last thrust," was the reply. "I saw the death pallor in the light of the rising moon."

"But this woman defies me. She sends word that the gates of the castle are not barred to me, but at the same time she wants me not as her guest."

"Women are strange creatures," ventured the Count. "I have had a try with the fairest of them."

"As we all have had," smiled Francis. "It is a fair slap in the royal face. By the gods! I am minded to enter Castle Marx at the head of my force and take possession."

"A pretty thing to do, by my life!" assented Count Soldan. "It is a noble place."

Those who saw the Red Guard ride out of Frankfort with the Emperor at its head wondered whither it was bound. The morning was clear and a light wind lilted through the ancient trees that lined the royal way. Francis, on his mottled steed and in full armor, held his head high and looked neither to the right nor to the left, but straight ahead as if a great goal was in sight.

Count Soldan had retired to his own quarters and was engaged in a mild game of cards. His swarthy face was not at ease; he had lied to his master, and he knew it. He had not left Marc of Coblenz dead, as he had said, but a lie well told would stave off the day of evil which he saw looming up in the distance.

Meantime Francis was well on his journey. It was a long ride to the fortress castle, a gallop through the land of the legendary Rhine, with here and there a mighty pile set upon the crags, the home of some puissant baron almost as great as the man he served.

Meantime the Purple Princess had not been idle. Dagobert had mustered the guards and had looked to every weapon in the castle. The best halberds had been repolished, the culverins reset on the walls, and the spacious armory robbed of its keenest blades.

He shook his head at all these preparations. Would his mistress really defy the Emperor? Would she raise above the walls the banner of her father, with the couchant lion of Marx on its blue shield? Dared she resist for a moment the commands of Germany's crowned lord, she but a woman who with one word might share with him his state and the crown?

The Princess Eudora was everywhere. She had clad herself in her richest purple, and at her side hung a blade whose hilt was studded with gems. She carried herself with the grace of a born warrior; there was a haughtiness about her that stimulated the hearts of all who looked upon her, and for the moment the doubting Dagobert took hope.

Watchers had been set on the walls. Eudora felt that her sharp message would bring the man who sought her hand. She knew the young Emperor. She knew that he balked at nothing in love and war. Black Karl had gone back to his lair, and no doubt was taking counsel with himself how he might outwit her and bring her to the altar.

Seeing Marc watching her with pride, for she was beautiful in her uniform, she strode over to him and held out her hands.

"It is war," said she, her face glowing with ardor. "It is rebellion, if you look for another term. Never before was a woman assailed by so many gods of love and fiends of intrigue."

Marc stammered a reply which heightened her smile.

"Come to the west wall," she continued, leading him away in sight of her retainers. "I want to show you the fair lands of Marx for which I am going to fight."

"Against his majesty?"

"Why not? What right has a king to pluck the flower of love that blooms not for him?"

She led the way to the west wall, from which the lands of Marx stretched away in the glory of the autumn morn. The Purple Princess pointed out the conspicuous places, and dilated upon their beauty in flowing language. Yonder was a rivulet where she had played barefooted when a child, over there a hill of flowers lifted its head, and still nearer was the sacred spot where she had last heard her father's voice telling her to keep untarnished the lion banner of Marx, no matter what happened.

Marc of Coblenz listened entranced. Eudora increased in loveliness as she spoke; her eyes brightened more and more, and at last, drawing her sword, she swore anew to defend herself and the fortress castle against all enemies.

"Now for the secret of the castle," she exclaimed, turning suddenly on her heel. "I will reveal it to you, my love."

They turned from the battlement and re-entered the castle proper.

Princess Eudora did not pause until they had reached an iron door deep in the east wing. It was a gloomy spot, and when the Princess took a bunch of keys from her girdle and opened the heavy portal, Marc involuntarily recoiled.

"There are really no terrors of the dark," laughed Eudora, taking note of his action. "This is the secret of Castle Marx."

A short stairway led down into the gloom from the door, and Eudora descended with the young Marc at her heels. There was a narrow passage at the end of the flight, and they traversed it in silence. In a few minutes they reached another portal, which was opened with a second key, and as it swung back Marc uttered a cry.

He entered a spacious chamber lighted mysteriously. It was richly furnished. The walls were hung with the most delicate tapestry; there were portraits of armored knights everywhere, and on a table stood a statuette of old Prince Marx, her father, one of the greatest warriors of Germany.

"My underground nest," cried Eudora, with a sweeping gesture. "Here are the treasures of Castle Marx. In yonder chest is gold enough to equip an army. I have never touched it. My hands have never fingered the riches of my house. The time has not yet come for that sort of spoliation. Think you, my dear Marc, that I am going to exchange all this for a throne? Think you I will cast this aside to become the wife of Black Karl?"

She laughed till her bright eyes twinkled with delight.

"I have but three hundred men to fight for me," she went on. "They are as nothing against the minions of the two subtle rivals for my hand."

"But what they lack in numbers they will make up in bravery," exclaimed Marc.

"All but one—the man with the traitor's heart."

"What?" was the reply. "There can be no traitor in Castle Marx?"

"There is a traitor here," said Eudora, firmly.

The hand of the young German flew to his sword hilt.

"He is one whom you would never suspect," the Purple Princess resumed calmly. "I opine that you see no treachery in Dagobert's eyes."

"Dagobert, the captain of the Guard?" cried Marc of Coblenz. "'Tis impossible, Princess."

"Nothing in this world of ours is impossible," Eudora said. "I have kept Dagobert here that I might watch him. I have looked into the depths of his soul and seen treason there. He is an adventurer who would sell his soul for the sort of stuff in yon chest. Nay, you shall not deal with him. We may be able to use him in the near future. Already he has sold himself to the crowned miscreant who comes hither to ask for my hand. Let Dagobert alone. I have something here that can deal with all traitors," and she lightly touched her sword hilt.

When they again reached the upper air they beheld the defenders of the castle marshaled in the court.

"Long live our glorious Princess!" was the greeting that shook the air.

Marc threw a hasty glance toward Dagobert. The lips of the captain of the Guard had not parted. He wondered if Eudora had noticed the man's silence.

"It must be so," muttered Marc of Coblenz. "And if you betray the Purple Princess, even if you take refuge in the palace of the Emperor Francis, Dagobert, the sword that hangs at my side shall find your craven heart!"

At that moment his gaze encountered that of the man of whom he had spoken, and in the eye of Dagobert he saw eternal hatred and war to the knife.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "BLACK FRIAR."

ABOVE the highest turret of Castle Marx floated the blazoned banner of the Emperor Francis, with its golden eagle outspread in the beams of the rising sun. And near it was the emblem of Marx, the lion on its azure field.

The royal wooer had come. With the graciousness of her race, no matter what her real feelings were, the Princess Eudora had opened the gates to her sovereign, knowing that he came to make her Empress. Marc of Coblenz had gone home, but he fain would have remained to meet his rival and to stand between his love and the hated altar.

"You will come again," Eudora had said in parting, with her hands in his and the light of love in her deep eyes. "This is not forever, my dear. Fear not for Eudora of Marx. She knows the art of dissimulation and all the highways and byways of flattery and intrigue. Francis counts without his host, emperor though he be."

Reluctantly Marc had spurred away, ever and anon looking back at a figure on the wall, and when he turned for the last time he saw a white kerchief against the vaulted blue.

The Emperor drew rein in the court and bent to receive the winsome smile of the Purple Princess.

For three days he had been Eudora's guest. There were fetes and scenes of skill by Dagobert's men; the Red Guard of the Emperor found their matches in the stalwart retainers of Marx, and Eudora had showered applause on both sides.

So well the beautiful woman played her game that Francis looked for an easy conquest. He was nobly handsome, the fairest of his ancient family, but beneath all his graces lay the slime of the serpent and the vengeance of the lion.

"Tell me, Sir Dagobert," he said to the captain of Eudora's guard, whom he met secretly, "what became of the young man of Coblenz who used to visit here?"

"He is gone," was the reply.

The Emperor started, remembering what Count Soldan had said, and passed his hand nervously over his face.

"He was here, then?" he ventured.

"Aye, that he was, your majesty. They brought him into the castle wounded one night, for he was beset by four ruffians, and but for his swordplay he would have perished."

This was ill news for the royal wooer. More than this, he saw that Soldan had deliberately lied. Francis gnashed his teeth at this information and looked away.

"Was he sorely wounded?" he suddenly asked.

"Two thrusts that might have killed but for the Princess' nursing."

"Think you, Dagobert, she really cares

for Marc of Coblenz?" queried the Emperor.

"It is not for me, your majesty, to sound a woman's heart, seeing I have never been in love," was the response.

"But you have eyes, Dagobert."

"Mostly for those whom I do not fancy."

"But you leave the subject. Let us travel back to it. Does your mistress love Marc?"

"I'm sure she does."

The Emperor frowned and laid his hand on Dagobert's arm.

"Whither went this interloper?"

"The Princess sent him back to Coblenz."

"When she heard I was coming?"

"Not before, as your majesty should know."

"It's enough," growled Francis, and turning on his heel he tramped away, not once looking back at the captain of the Guard.

A pair of beautiful eyes had observed this secret meeting. The Purple Princess, concealed by a casement, had seen, but not heard, and in a few moments Dagobert had been summoned into her presence.

"What did he say?" were the first words that greeted him.

Eudora was looking straight into Dagobert's treacherous orbs. He could not avoid the encounter. At that moment he would sooner have been chasing the wild boar or crossing swords with Black Karl himself.

"You heard me, Captain Dagobert," continued the Princess, sticking tenaciously to her will. "The Emperor was not discussing statecraft with the speech he made to you?"

"No, Princess."

"He was not showing you how to hunt with the falcon?"

"I need no instructions in that pleasing art," grumbled the captain of the Guard.

"Then go straight to the kernel of truth," commanded Eudora. "What did his majesty say? What was nearest his heart when he spake to you?"

"He questioned me about Marc of Coblenz."

A gleam of triumph lit up the Princess' eyes.

"I thought as much," she exclaimed. "Did he ask if Marc was sorely wounded in the encounter without the castle?"

"He did."

"And you told him?"

"I kept nothing back, for he is the Emperor."

"That is all. You may go," and the gaze of the Purple Princess followed the man who was glad to get out of her presence.

Dagobert had scarcely departed ere a footfall came down the corridor and paused at the portal. Eudora threw herself into a silken chair, and took up a Pomeranian lapdog, which she began to fondle.

"Come in," she responded, in the most melodious of voices, and the Emperor stood before her.

"You will pardon this intrusion," he began, when he had made his obeisance. "The breeze has come up from the Rhine, and the wood seems to invite us to a canter."

"With all my heart," was the surprising answer, and Eudora dropped the pet and rose to her feet. "I will call for my palfrey at once, your majesty."

Francis started. Had he heard aright? Was it true, after all, that the Princess Eudora loved Marc of Coblenz?

"I have much to show you," she went on, her voice gaining in sweetness as she proceeded. "There are nooks about Castle Marx that may have been fashioned by the fairies. We will ride to the waterfall, at least, a good two miles away."

"You entrance me with your pleasure," replied Francis, seeing not the real light that lit up her face. "All your broad acres are a fairy realm."

Half an hour later the draw was lowered by the watchful menials, and the pair cantered over the bush fringed road.

The purple plume above Eudora's hat danced in the wind which reddened her cheeks, and the Emperor looked at her more than once in silent tribute to her loveliness.

"I have heard whisperings of Black Karl since coming here," he said abruptly. "Does the robber baron frequent this vicinity?"

"Aye, that he does. You can almost see his lair from here," and Eudora pointed to a mountain which rose darkly above its mates.

"But he exacts tribute from you, Princess?"

A cunning look beamed instantly in the Princess' eyes.

"He would exact a very heavy one," she answered. "In truth he would rob Castle Marx."

"What! plunder your castle? The reptile!"

"Aye, that he would. But for the bravery of my retainers the other night, he even now might be my guest instead of your majesty."

Francis was puzzled.

"I must break this scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "He insults me when he thinks of levying tribute on you."

The Princess laughed.

By this time they had reached the isolated waterfall which was dropping its silvery waters over a cliff and sending them down to the lordly river not far away.

A silver cup hung on the bough of an ancient oak, and perceiving it, the Emperor sprang to the ground.

"It is a wishing cup," he cried. "I see the old familiar inscription on it," and taking the cup from the bough, he bent over the shining pool at the foot of the fall and filled it to the brim.

"You shall wish first," he said, carrying the draught to her, as she sat in her gilt saddle. "Whatever that wish be, I will second it. And we will summon the fairies of the pool to witness it."

The cunning smile still lingered on Eudora's face as she reached out her hand.

"The ogre and not the fairies may come," she said, and then her voice suddenly changed.

"Look! the ogre anticipates!" she cried, pointing to a clump of dense shrubbery at the fringe of the lakelet. "The Black Friar of Castle Marx is again abroad."

The Emperor Francis whirled on his heel with his sword half drawn. His features were tense and colorless. In a second the blade received the light of the sun, and he stood staring at a face which was now plainly visible. Suddenly he darted forward, but in another instant he had paused, and the blade dropped from his hand.

That same instant the visage vanished, and the parted bushes came together like an emerald curtain.

"Didst see the Black Friar?" queried Eudora.

"I saw the devil of death—the evil genius of my royal line!" stammered the white-faced man. "When does he come to Castle Marx?"

"When? Whenever evil is abroad. He comes when the wolf would devour the lamb. Thrice hath he come between a Princess of Marx and a hated altar. The last time was when your father sought an empress within my castle walls, and now——"

The Purple Princess paused, for the face of the Emperor Francis was too horrible to look upon.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TERRORS OF A NIGHT.

THE return ride to the fortress castle was made almost in silence. Even when the gates had clanged upon the pair there remained a pallor on the Emperor's face. He went directly to his apartments and locked the door.

"The devil of death!" he cried, beating his breast with his hands. "The Black Friar is the bete noir of my imperial house. Why must he come now?" and he paused and went to the door. "I must see Dagobert concerning this specter."

The giant captain of the Guard came at his call and stood at attention.

"Dagobert," said Francis, "have you ever heard of the Black Friar?"

Dagobert started and went white.

"Who has not heard of him, your majesty?" he said at length. "It is a legend that he comes when danger impends."

"Hast ever seen him, Dagobert?"

"Once. It was in my boyhood."

"What impended when he came?"

"The abduction of the Princess Alice by Duke Waldo."

"And what happened?"

The Emperor's anxiety caused him to lean forward out of breath.

"The Duke was found dead in the Dark Forest."

"By whose hand?"

"God knows, your majesty."

Francis took a quick turn about the room.

"I fear him not," he cried, with rising braggadocio. "I fear not this ancient ogre. It is an old woman's tale, told at the midnight hour to terrify babes."

Dagobert was silent.

"I shall leave Castle Marx tomorrow," Francis suddenly continued. "When I come again, Dagobert, it will be to make your mistress my empress."

"Then she has accepted the honor?"

"She will, Dagobert, she will!" exclaimed the Emperor. "And I will make you captain of the Royal Horse."

The captain of the Guard fell on his knees at the Emperor's feet.

"While I am away you will watch over the Princess Eudora. You will see that there is no love-making in Castle Marx."

"Your majesty will find Dagobert faithful in all things."

"And if the interloper comes—I mean Marc of Coblenz—you will see that he tarries not long."

"There is no love between us."

"Good, my loyal Dagobert! Already you are showing your fealty to your new master. I salute you."

Once more Francis of Germany was alone. A look of victory brightened his eyes. He had pulled himself together, and once more was the Emperor. As yet he had not spoken to the Purple Princess concerning the purpose of his visit. His will was law to all his subjects, and courageous must be the one who dared to cross his authority.

With the coming of night he left the chamber and went out upon the battlement. Shrouded in his cloak he stood in the stiff breeze and gazed over the rich moonlit landscape that lay below. There was a boatsong on the sweeping Rhine; it was answered from far away, and for a moment the Emperor listened, almost forgetful of his surroundings.

He did not hear the silken footstep that approached him. His back was turned toward the advancing figure, but when he caught the footfall he turned as a pair of arms encircled him. Before he could cry out he was lifted from the flagging and swung out over the rampart.

"Silence, Francis of Germany!" hissed a voice at his ear. "Utter a sound, and your pulseless body will lie at the foot of the castle wall."

The grip by which he was held was one of relentless steel. His eyes caught sight of a half-hooded face; he saw a pair of tigerish eyes, and felt a panting breath on his pallid cheek.

"Go back!" said a stern voice, whose very intonation chilled the Emperor's blood. "The game is not for the royal hunter. Go back to your wolfish lair and make love to one who is willing to sell her soul and happiness for the sharing of your tainted crown."

The Emperor Francis stared with distended eyes.

"The Black Friar!" said a voice in the depths of his soul.

He shivered at his perilous situation. What if the icy grip should relax? What if the Black Friar should let him fall——"

He dared not think of the rest.

As suddenly as he had been lifted in midair he was set down upon the stones, and in a second found himself alone.

"Once more the devil of death!" gasped Francis. "He is flesh and blood, at any rate. Where is Grimal? We must seize this demon, and make sure that he plays no more tricks in Castle Marx."

Away he went, spurning the corridors in his flight, and soon descended into the court. The captain of the Red Guard came at his call. Grimal awaited his master's pleasure.

"See that every gate is closed," commanded the white-faced man. "Set guards at every door."

His troop was instantly on their feet.

"Search every nook of the castle," continued Francis. "Look for a wretch garbed in black—a man with a cowl."

"Hold, menials!" suddenly rang out a woman's voice. "What means all this uproar? Who commands here but myself?"

The words went through the Emperor like so many arrows. He whirled to come face to face with the Purple Princess, white in her loveliness, with two flashing eyes above her velvet collar.

She was a statue of authority in the moonlight, her regal figure drawn to its full height, and from head to foot transcendent in her nobility.

"I am mistress here, your majesty," she went on, as she faced the monarch. "No one commands within these walls but Eudora of Marx. I give way to no one."

Francis found his tongue at last.

"I do not wish to usurp authority," said he, his gaze falling before Eudora's. "But I have been assaulted. I have been held over the battlements by one who is not permitted to touch my royal person."

A smile curled the woman's lips.

"Surely none of my retainers would thus assail your majesty!"

"It was the Black Friar," answered Francis. "He stole upon me like a thief of the night——"

He was interrupted by a musical laugh.

"The Black Friar, says your majesty?" she said. "Who let him into the castle?"

"I know not, but it was he."

'And thinking he still hides within these walls, you would bar his exit?"

"That my sword might end his villainy!" cried the Emperor.

The Purple Princess turned to her own retainers and her voice was heard by all.

"Ransack the castle for the Black Friar," she exclaimed. "Search every place where even a mouse can hide. Bring the Black Friar to me if he is within," and then she turned away with the old smile once more illumining her face.

The Emperor stared and bit his nether lip.

"Go on!" he cried to Grimal. "Do as the Princess bids you. And when you have found the Black Friar hale him to me for the point of my sword."

There was a loud scattering of armed men. Their boots clanged on the staircases, their weapons made a racket wherever they went. Doors were banged all over the stately pile. First and foremost among the hunters was Grimal, captain of the Red Guard. Francis waited in the court.

"The fools will not find him," he muttered to himself, when many minutes had passed. "It is a trick, and woe to the person who has set it afoot."

Suddenly strange shouts reached his ears.

One of the great doors leading into the court was thrown open, and a score of his halberdiers rushed out.

"The royal banner is down!" cried the foremost. "Look up at the turret. No flag but that of Marx is there."

Francis looked and recoiled. It was true. His royal pennon was not to be seen and the only one that kissed the winds was the lion-banner of the Purple Princess.

"Fiends of perdition, what means this?" he flashed, whipping out his sword. "Where is the Princess Eudora?"

"We heard her harp but a moment ago in her apartments," was the reply.

"I will find her and demand to know who lowered the banner of Germany."

Ere he could reach the open portal he was confronted by four of his retainers who bore between them a man apparently dead.

"We found Grimal in one of the lower passages," explained one of the quartet. "He is dead, your majesty."

"Grimal of the Red Guard!" stammered Francis. "How came he by his taking off?"

"He was strangled. The marks of the murderer's hand are still on his throat," and the body was placed at the Emperor's feet that he might see.

Francis threw his blade aside and knelt over Grimal with welded lips, and as he looked, down from one of the lofty apartments of Castle Marx floated the strains of a sweet German song.

CHAPTER VIII.

A STORMY INTERVIEW.

A FLASH of indignation lit up the eyes of the white-faced Emperor when he raised his head and listened for a moment to the strains from Eudora's casement.

"She sings with murder in heart," he cried, rising to his feet and clinching his hands. "I will tame this woman before I win her. She shall know that Francis is her lord."

He strode past the body and entered the castle. At every step he heard the song, and this only intensified his resolution. Once or twice his hand sought the hilt of his sword, and he trod the passages with the vengeful eagerness of a royal lion.

Arrived at the Princess' chamber door, he struck the heavy panel with a clinched fist and drew his figure to its imperial height. The song broke in the middle of a stanza.

A footfall fell upon his ear and the portal swung wide. Before him stood the Purple Princess, her fair face flushed with her playing and the instrument still in her hands.

"My lord," said Eudora, with a witching bow which for a moment almost disarmed the Emperor.

He stepped into the beautiful apartment, choking down his temper as well as he could, but passion-guided still.

"Go down and look at my dead!" almost thundered Francis. "Go down and gaze at the work of the fiend you harbor."

It was apparent from her look that she did not comprehend his outburst.

"Then hand of the Black Friar has taken the life of Grimal, the captain of the Red Guard."

"You bring me news," calmly answered Eudora. "I knew nothing of this."

There was truth in word and look, but Francis did not seem to acknowledge it.

"But the murderer is concealed in Castle Marx," he went on, abating none of his anger. "My men found him strangled in one of the lower passages. They were searching for the fiend who held me over the battlements——"

"Your majesty misjudges me," interposed the Princess. "Think ye I would direct a hand like that against the captain of the Red Guard?"

But who but the Black Friar would take Grimal's life?"

"I will have the castle searched. This moment I will summon my men for this purpose."

"More than this," snapped the Emperor. "My banner has been lowered from the turret."

"Your banner, you say?"

"The imperial standard of the realm."

"This is more news. Wait here, your majesty. I will summon Dagobert and send him on the mission of search."

As she tried to pass him, Francis threw out his hand and clutched her sleeve.

"Wait till I have fully spoken," cried he. "I have come to make you Empress. I am here to bestow upon you a crown that the whole world fears. I——"

The look which immediately lit up her eyes cut his sentence in twain.

"You do me too much honor," said the Purple Princess. "I seek no such preferment at your hands."

"I will it, and is not that enough?" was the reply.

"Sometimes an emperor wills and his subjects do not obey."

This was a challenge that sent the Emperor's blood lavalike through every vein.

"You refuse?" he exclaimed, the old rage coming back in full tide. "You refuse me for one whose blood is as water to mine?"

"Of whom does your majesty speak?" quietly inquired Eudora.

"Of the Coblenz lout!" thundered Francis. "I speak of young Marc."

Eudora's cheeks, white till now, went red again.

"Is not Marc of Coblenz worthy of a woman's love?"

"Not when an emperor woos," hissed Francis. "'Tis said you love this miscreant. 'Tis more than whispered that you belong to him."

She jerked suddenly from his grasp and started back. There was defiance in her mien, and it made her more beautiful than ever. She was a true Marx

(Continued on page sixteen.)

SOLD AT AUCTION

Or, ONE WOMAN'S FATE

By ANNIE BROWNLEE QUIMBY

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CHAPTER XI.

SIR RICHARD did not care for his magnificent estate in Devonshire. He considered it too dreary and dull, and seldom visited it, except with a large company of friends. But to Dorothy the Grange and its surrounding woods were beautiful beyond words. The stately forest, that sheltered the deer, the fox, the rabbit, and the pheasant, with its delightful paths and shady nooks, where the green arched overhead, all breathed of solitude and peace.

The sky was a perfect blue, and the weather warm and balmy. The invigorating air refreshed her tired body and soothed her troubled nerves. She almost lived out of doors, wandering through the stately woods, or sitting on the green, velvety lawn, playing with her cherished baby, or reading some favorite book.

When the sun had disappeared in the west, and the soft summer night had cast a mantle of darkness over the world, sad, sweet music would steal softly through the stately corridors of the old mansion, or, perhaps, a dreamy Irish love song would wake the slumbering echoes.

In the troubled month that followed, Dorothy often looked back on the calm and holy peace of those first few weeks spent at the Grange with tenderest regret—not that they had been, but that they could never come again.

One morning at breakfast, a letter was handed her from Lady Althea, which brought a bright, happy flush to her delicate face.

"I am so glad Althea is coming," she whispered, half audibly. "She will love the dear old place, I know, and its picturesque beauty will just suit her beauty-loving soul." She rang the bell. In a minute a servant appeared.

"Sarah, please tell Mrs. Stewart I should like to see her," she said, with a pleasant smile at the maid.

The servants at the Grange adored their young mistress as much as they disliked and feared their master. It was a matter for rejoicing, rather than regret, that he came so little among them.

"Good morning, Mrs. Stewart," said Dorothy, glancing up from the perusal of her letter.

"Good morning, my lady. A pleasant morning, is it not."

"Very," Dorothy replied, "but we always have pleasant mornings in Devonshire."

"Well, yes, we don't have much to complain of down here. Still it is not always like it is at present."

"No, I suppose not. We can hardly expect to have all sunshine and no clouds. So long as the clouds do not entirely obliterate the sunshine, I suppose we must not complain," Dorothy answered, a little sadly.

"No, we must take the weather as God sends it. Yet, it is always a comfort to know the sun is shining on the other side, whether we see it or not."

"That is a fact," Dorothy answered thoughtfully. I wished to ask you if it would be possible to have the blue room aired and fixed up by this evening? I am expecting Lady Althea Morton down on the evening train. I would like her to have the blue room on account of the lovely view from the windows."

"Oh, yes. It can be got ready at once," replied the housekeeper, promptly. "I will see to it right away. Are there any special orders for dinner?"

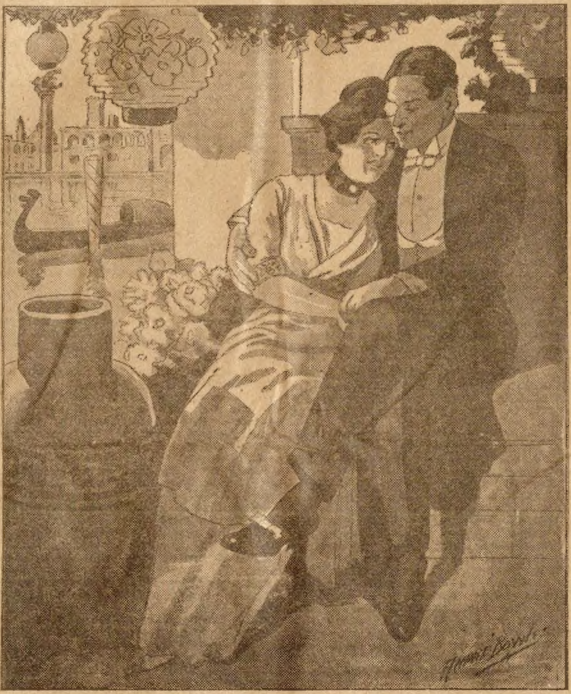
"No, I think not. Lady Althea, like myself, doesn't care for elaborate dinners. You may see, however, that there is a generous supply of fresh fruits, the best obtainable, and just the usual dinner. I think that will be all, Mrs. Stewart," she ended, with a nod of dismissal. "One moment, Mrs. Stewart," she called, as the woman was passing out of the door. "You might get that set of Egyptian vases from the mantle in the library, and take them to the blue room. I will fill them with flowers myself."

The housekeeper nodded and passed out.

Dorothy spent a very busy day, preparing for her friend's arrival. Flowers in abundance were artistically arranged about the beautiful rooms. In the rare old Egyptian vases in the blue room the most fragrant roses and exquisite lilies of the valley were placed. Nothing so delighted Lady Althea as beautiful flowers.

In the early, purple twilight of a lovely summer day, Lady Althea Morton arrived at the quaint old Grange. Dorothy's welcome was gracious and tender. She was sincerely glad to have her friend with her to enjoy the rest and tranquillity of the Grange. The dainty, exquisite beauty of Lady Althea harmonized perfectly with the dusky chambers and magificent oak-paneled galleries and lofty halls of the Grange. Dorothy enjoyed watching her saunter through the spacious rooms.

Lady Althea was enchanted with the fine old place, and never tired of singing its praises. The stately old forest, with its ancient trees and delightful babbling brook, was to her a source of continuous pleasure. Could her London friends have got a glimpse of her in short skirt and jacket and jaunty little sailor hat, they would have been surprised at the energy and alertness displayed. There was none of the languid gracefulness that characterized the beautiful, exclusive Lady Althea in the girl who romped so merrily through the forests of Devonshire. Dorothy marveled, while she rejoiced to see her friend so happy.



"Lady Melville is neither cold nor reserved."

One day, on one of their innumerable rambles through the woods, they paused on the summit of a hill. Below them flowed a clear, sparkling brook, that nowhere appeared so lovely as when seen in the shadow of a dense wood. They watched it with admiration, as it went dancing merrily over the rocks and pebbles on its way to the sea.

"Is it not glorious?" cried Lady Althea, as she turned eyes full of soft rapture to her friend. "This is life! This is freedom!"

"Freedom!" cried Lady Melville. "Is there any such thing as that? Even that charming little brook is not free. It must follow the course God made for it. There is no creature living, either human or beast, that has absolute freedom. So long as soul and body are united, so long will bondage remain."

"You are right, dear. For the moment I forgot that perfect freedom is not for this world. God's ways are not our ways, and it is best so."

"Yet you have not much to complain of," laughed Dorothy. "You are as nearly free as it is given to mortals to be. You go where you like, do as you like, and have no husband to find fault with you. Surely that is sufficient freedom?"

"True, dear," the other replied, with sudden gravity. "Yet my experience of life has taught me that too much freedom does not tend to make us happier. Woman's nature is peculiarly self-sacrificing. The wives and mothers who are called upon to sacrifice much for those they love are invariably the happiest women. There have been times when I have positively envied the poor mothers in the slums who would press their babies to their hearts and gaze with real love and adoration at the pale, pinched little face that was dearer to them than all earthly possessions."

"What a confession!" Dorothy said, but her eyes were suspiciously moist. "I am glad you haven't outlived that feminine weakness, my dear. You have the maternal instinct to a remarkable degree. You are right. Motherhood is a joy and a blessing.' God gives us none greater." There was a sweet, holy light in the very expressive eyes that Lady Althea had never seen there before. "But to think you should feel like that, and I never suspected it!" Dorothy added, with a radiant smile at her friend.

"My dear, the world has somehow or other formed the idea that I am emotionless and cold. That because I have never married, I have none of the tender feelings that are a woman's by right of her sex. I have found it less trouble to allow the idea to prevail than it would be to contradict it. Then, you know, an old maid is not supposed to have any tenderness of heart. She must be cold, sour, and unapproachable, if she would maintain her reputation."

"Well, then, my dear, as an old maid you are a failure. You are neither cold, nor sour, nor unapproachable, but the dearest girl living."

Lady Althea smiled pleasantly.

"The world does not see me through your eyes, dear Lady Melville," she said.

"One thing puzzles me, though," Dorothy remarked thoughtfully. "That is how a woman of your temperament has never married? With the strong maternal instincts which you possess, you would make an ideal mother and a model wife. Some man has missed a jewel of great price."

"There is an old saying, that it is best to 'let well enough alone.' I might be worse off than I am at present."

"Yet you envied the mother in the slums?"

"That was one of those moments when nature was seeking revenge. Nature exacts many penalties from us bachelor maids, you know. That was one of them."

"You will marry yet! A woman of your temperament can't go through life without husband or children to love."

"My dear Dorothy, at thirty-four years of age?" asked Lady Althea, with surprise and a little scorn.

"That is not old, and you are only a girl at heart."

Lady Althea smiled pensively.

"I shall never marry. Men as a rule are stupid and uninteresting, and then, I have observed that as a rule married people are unhappy."

Dorothy colored painfully, and her eyes sought the pretty little brook that flowed ever onward.

"You are judging the world by the people one meets in society. Yes, it is a painful fact that many of the marriages are merely business arrangements. There is seldom any heart in it. Therefore, it can hardly be expected that much happiness will result from the union."

"It never does. Sentiment seldom outlives the honeymoon."

"In business marriages I believe that is true, but in real love affairs, it should endure forever."

"My dear Dorothy, you are very romantic. But have you never thought of the very few really happy marriages one sees? One or the other is sure to weary of their bondage, or grow indifferent to the charms they once thought so dear."

"What makes you think I am romantic?" Dorothy asked thoughtfully.

"Many things. You are full of romance, which is an unfortunate quality to possess."

"Why so?" Dorothy asked.

"Well, in the first place romantic people never see things as they really are. Then, again, they are like the great poets of old, they go through life misunderstood. Their lives are miserable worrying over the troubles of others. Their sympathies are too acute. They love intensely and imagine the one loved possessed of every high and noble quality, which, alas! they seldom are. In short, they set up a god and worship it, until amid a series of shocks and disappointments they are brought to the bitter knowledge that their idol is but common clay. Then, their ideals are shattered, their hearts broken."

Both were silent for several minutes. They were going slowly along the narrow path that led through the woods to the Grange.

"What an insight you have into human nature!" Dorothy said, slowly. "You must have thought a great deal about such things, to be able to talk like that."

"Not so very much. Our faces reveal a great deal to a careful observer. There are few studies more fascinating than that of the face—love, joy, pleasure, pain, hatred, and malice succeed each other so quickly, and are such indelible proof of the character and temperament of the one who possesses them, that it would be folly to let them pass unnoticed."

"My dear Althea, you are a wonder!" cried Dorothy, laughingly. "What impression did you get from my face?"

"Well, if I remember right, I thought you very unhappy. Your ideals are too high to be realized. You are fanciful and emotional and extremely sensitive. I said to myself: 'She cares nothing for social prominence or worldly fame. Her happiness lies in close communing with nature, and in the quiet tranquillity of home, in the society of those she loves.'"

"You know me better than I know myself. You are right; society and the world are nothing to me. Home is my heaven. But how strange that you should think me unhappy!"

"Not strange at all, dear. Your face is more given to reveal than to conceal your thoughts. Yours is not a weak nature, yet, something tells me there will come a day when you will need all your strength."

CHAPTER XII.

AS LADY ALTHEA and Dorothy stepped upon the green, velvety lawn a baby's prattle fell musically on their ears. Two little twinkling eyes saw Dorothy coming, and two eager, impatient little feet were making frantic efforts to reach her. With a glad cry of "My little darling!" the mother ran forward to catch the baby form to her breast.

"Ah, Althea, you have missed the sweetest and purest joy that the world knows. I thank God that I am a mother. My baby compensates me for all other deficiencies of life."

A thrill of holy joy pierced her heart, as she folded her baby to her breast.

"How you must love that child, Dorothy!" Lady Althea said, half enviously.

"Love him! That doesn't express it at all. I adore him! In those tiny hands of his he holds my life—my very soul's salvation!" the mother cried.

Lady Althea wisely shook her head. "My dear Dorothy, it is not wise to love any one like that."

"I know what you would say, but I can't help loving him so. He is my all!" And she kissed the lovely baby lips. "I often wonder how mothers, who have innocent little children to love and cherish, could 'go wrong,' as the saying is. I could understand it in the case of a wife or husband whose home was unhappy, and who had no tender baby fingers to twine about the heartstrings, but for a mother to forsake her own children for love or any other worldly consideration, is to me inexplicable."

"It does seem strange," her friend answered thoughtfully. "And I have noticed that it is not always the frivolous, flighty women who are guilty of such folly, but often the calm, thoughtful ones, whom of all people we would least expect."

"Yes," Dorothy answered calmly enough, though her face had grown very pale. "Those are the cases which to the world seem so strange and unexplainable. They see none of the suffering and heartaches that have led up to such a rash act, but only the result."

"It is hard to judge such cases," her friend replied. "I have known of so many unhappy marriages, and so very few really happy ones, that I long ago came to the conclusion that matrimony is a peculiarly uncertain state of existence. I have known people to marry for love, for money, for position, for duty, or for the sake of pleasing their relatives. Yet, with the exception of one or two cases in favor of the first mentioned motive, the marriages have turned out failures. The lovers were not really in love with each other, but merely thought they were, and within a year have found out their mistake; the others are miserable, indifferent or faithless, as the case may be. But they are all unhappy—terribly unhappy. With such an example of matrimonial bliss constantly before my eyes, you can scarcely blame me for being an 'old maid,' can you, dear?"

"No, I suppose not," Dorothy answered. "You are one of the fortunate women who have only yourself to please."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE following morning dawned wild and temptestuous. As Dorothy awakened the howling of the wind and the fierce clatter of rain against her window fell with a shiver upon her ears. She arose and donning a loose dressing gown, stood gazing out of the window at the driving storm.

"There will be no pleasant rambles today," she thought regretfully, gazing on the dripping lawn beneath.

There was a hurried knock on the chamber door. She opened it at once. Something in the quick, peremptory knock sent a chill to her heart.

"Nurse would like you to come at once, my lady," a pleasant-faced maid said. "Baby don't seem to be very well this morning."

"Thank you, Mary. Tell nurse I will be there immediately," she replied, a vague fear gripping her heart. "Baby not well! Little Dick sick!" she whispered fearfully to herself. "Oh, God! what would I do if——" She did not finish the sentence, the very horror of the thought freezing the words on her lips.

She went straight to the little white-curtained cot, and bent eagerly over the child. He was sleeping, but the sweet baby face was flushed, the little hands hot and feverish, the lips parched and dry.

"Oh, nurse, what is it?" she cried in alarm.

"I don't know, my lady. It may be scarlet fever, or measles, or some such thing. Children always have them, you know. I hear they have diphtheria in the village, but I hardly think it is that."

"Diphtheria!" Dorothy echoed, in a horror-stricken voice. "That is very dangerous, is it not, nurse?"

"Yes, very, and I have heard it is the very worst kind they have in the village. I think we should send for Dr. Wright."

"Oh, certainly! I had forgotten that. Send James for the Doctor; and tell him to hasten."

The baby stirred uneasily, the blue eyes opened wide and looked at Dorothy. The soft baby lips murmured "Mamma," and two little hot hands were stretched toward her.

She took the little one in her arms, and pressed him to her heart, murmuring the fond and tender words the baby ears had grown to love. And soothed and content, he dozed uneasily in her arms.

Two anxious hours dragged wearily by ere the Doctor arrived, and the little form, limp and unresisting, was taken from her arms.

The Doctor made a thorough examination of the little form, and grew very thoughtful and serious. He read the anguish on the young mother's face, and in his heart he pitied her, for her knew what the end must be.

"My baby is very sick, Doctor. I can read it in your face."

"Yes, Lady Meliville, the child is seriously ill. He has contracted black diphtheria in its worst form."

"But there is hope, Doctor? Don't tell me my baby will not recover!" she cried, a quiver of agony passing over her face.

"While there is life, there is hope, dear Lady Melville. We will do everything possible for his recovery, but I will not seek to deceive you. Recovery is rare, and in the present case there seems little possibility of that. The disease seems to have developed with surprising rapidity. Still we will hope for the best," he said, gently.

"Oh, Doctor, save my baby! Save my little Dick! He is all I have!" she cried piteously.

"I will do all in my power to save the little one, but try and remember that there is another physician who is greater than I. If it His will that the child be taken, I am powerless to save."

The Doctor left some medicine and explicit directions for its use with the nurse. Then, turning to Dorothy, he said:

"I would advise that you notify Sir Richard at once. His duty is here for the present." Then he left, promising to call in the course of a few hours again.

As Dr. Wright was passing through the hall Lady Althea stopped him.

"Is the child very ill, Doctor?" she inquired anxiously.

"Very ill, indeed," was the quiet reply. It is about the worst case of diphtheria I have ever seen."

"But there is hope? You do not fear the worst?" she asked in sudden alarm.

"The very worst. There is absolutely no hope," was the grave reply.

"But Doctor, is there nothing that can be done? You don't know what that child is to Lady Melville."

Her face had blanched, and a cold chill lay on her heart. In fancy she could hear Dorothy saying again: "In those tiny hands of his he holds my life—my soul's salvation." She knew what terrible meaning those words had, and her heart grew chill with fear—not for the child, but for the mother.

"I think I know something of what the child is to Lady Melville," the Doctor replied thoughtfully. "Her whole life is wrapped up in it; in fact, it is her one happiness. I would do much to save the child for its mother, but I fear that is impossible."

Lady Althea went slowly up the stairs, and directly to the nursery, where Dorothy sat with white, despairing face and eyes full of pitiful anguish.

The leaden-footed hours dragged wearily by. To Lady Althea this day was the most terrible she had ever known.

"You must leave me, dear Althea," Dorothy said at last, sadly. "The Doctor tells me the disease is very contagious and you would be exposed to great danger were you to remain. It was very selfish of me not to have thought of that before, but you will forgive me, dear, I am so nearly broken-hearted?" The voice is inexpressibly sad and despairing.

"My dear Dorothy, there is nothing to forgive, and I shall not desert you in your hour of trouble. I don't fear the disease. Grown people seldom contract it."

"But I can't think of exposing you to the possible danger," Dorothy replied. "It would be much better were you to leave. Nurse tells me that the servants, with a few exceptions, have fled.

"All the more reason why I should remain. I shall not leave you unless you absolutely order me away, and I know you won't do that," answered Lady Althea, with a gentle, persuasive smile that suited the dainty loveliness of her face so well.

"Were I to do what is right, I would send you away this very minute," said Dorothy, with a sigh that is half a sob. "But I am selfish, and there is such a dull ache in my heart that I am tempted to take advantage of your generous offer, and keep you with me."

"I shall remain," her friend replied decisively. "Nothing could tempt me to leave you now."

"You are so kind, so stanch a friend, I should not allow you to sacrifice so much for me," Dorothy said earnestly.

"Hush, dear!" Lady Althea answered gently. "We will not discuss the matter further, as I have fully made up my mind to stay. I have sent the telegrams to Sir Richard and your mother. We should soon have a reply from London, at least."

While Lady Althea was yet speaking, the nurse entered and handed Dorothy the expected yellow envelope. Wearily she tore it open and read:

"Sorry to hear of your trouble, and regret that the nature of the illness prevents me from going to you. I would advise you to engage a thoroughly competent nurse and place the child in her hands till the danger of contracting the disease has passed.

Your loving mother,
"ANNA NEWBERRY."

Dorothy was silent for some minutes after reading her mother's telegram. Then, without a word of command, she handed the yellow slip to Lady Althea, and bent tenderly over her child's cot. Lady Althea read the message, then slowly folded it and replaced it in the envelope. There was a bright red spot on either cheek, and an angry gleam in the gray eyes. Neither referred again to Mrs. Newberry's polite message.

As the weary hours dragged by, no word came from Sir Richard. Owing to the uncertainty of his movements, he might not have received the message for some days, possibly not at all.

The Doctor had called again, but only shook his head. He would raise no false hopes. And as night closed in, it was apparent to all that the little life was slowly ebbing away.

The lamps were lighted, and the curtains closely drawn, and still Dorothy sat by the baby's cot, one tiny hand clasped tightly in her own. She still wore the loose white dressing gown donned in the morning. Lady Althea sat on the opposite side of the cot, and they silently watched the little form, which to one, at least, was dearer than life itself.

Suddenly there came a ring at the doorbell, and they both started.

"Who can it be, I wonder?" Dorothy said, slowly raising her troubled eyes from the child's face to look at her friend.

"I don't know. I'll just run down and see," answered Lady Althea.

As she reached the top of the stairs she heard a well remembered voice, and with a little joyous cry, she ran lightly down the stairs and with that rare smile of hers welcomed "Uncle Archie's wife" to the Grange.

"Dear Mrs. Douglas, how delighted I am to see you here! But have you heard——"

"Yes, that is what brought me here. How is the child?"

"Sinking rapidly. I hardly expect it will live till tomorrow," she replied.

"And Dorothy?" the other asked anxiously.

"She is taking it very much to heart. I fear for the future if the child is taken away."

"Yes, it is unfortunate. Children are always such a safeguard," Mrs. Douglas replied, slowly removing her wraps.

"But how did you hear of the child's illness so soon?" Lady Althea asked curiously.

"I was at Mrs. Newberry's when your message came. Of course, she promptly decided that it would not be safe for her to come. Archie and I talked the matter over, and the result is I am here."

"And I am very glad of it. The truth is I dreaded to be alone with Dorothy when the end came. Her grief is terrible."

"Does Sir Richard know?" Mrs. Douglas saked.

"We wired him at the same time we did Mrs. Newberry, but it is a question if he gets it. It is two weeks since Lady Melville has heard from him. They may not be able to locate him."

"It's a beastly shame the way he has treated Dorothy, and they say he and Lady Betty are inseparable. I scarcely believe he would come, did he get it. He cares nothing for the child, you know."

"That is true. Yet, unless he is lost to all sense of honor, he will come home now."

"Honor and Richard Melville are strangers. If Lady Betty permits it, he may come. If not, he will manage to trump up some sort of a plausible excuse, and remain with his charmer."

"We will hope that he will come. It will be so much the better in the future if he does," Lady Althea replied.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE night wore on. The long, weary hours dragged their way slowly toward the dawn. The wind sighed softly. Slowly the silver streak of coming day painted the treetops and the gables of the old Grange with its golden tints.

The brightness of a new day burst upon a world that was throbbing with life and activity. But the golden sunshine fell upon a baby face that lay white and still, and the chillness of December was in a young mother's heart, almost stopping its beating.

Her child—her baby—had gone from her forever. She knelt beside the little white draped cot, where the sweet baby form lay, her wild, tearless eyes glued to the lovely face that was so calm and still and painless now, and she wrung her hands and cried:

"He is only sleeping! That is not death! It can't be death! My baby would not leave me—alone!" she cried, in awful anguish.

With gentle hands and soothing words, her friends tried to comfort her and draw her from the room, but in vain.

For hours she knelt there, deaf to all sympathies or entreaties, and it was only when mercifully unconscious that she was taken from the room.

The house was hushed and still. In one of the upper rooms the baby form lay white and motionless, with flowers piled high about its spotless bed.

Lady Althea and Mrs. Douglas often stole softly into the quiet chamber, and gazed at the little body lying so calm and peaceful there. As they looked on the exquisite face, on which death had left no shadow of fear, no trace of suffering, a vague sense of comfort stole over their souls that death could be so calm, so peaceful, so beautiful.

As they stood looking at the earthly tenement of the lovely infant, a soft step came along the corridor and entered the door. It was Dorothy, the sorrow-stricken mother. She went straight to the little bier and stood looking down at the little figure that once made life worth living for her.

As they watched the awful, tearless agony on the mother's face, they were moved to tears and tenderest pity. They could feel something of the loss, the desolation, the despair through which she must go, ere comfort was reached; when every child's voice would stab her aching heart like a knife; when the sight of a little shoe, a broken toy, would bring back the memory of her loss. Alas! Alas! for the life that amidst the storms and sorrows of the world clings but to one joy, then sees it suddenly dashed away, and in the future sees no ray of light, but feels that all is blank, desolate, and black, and only despair remains.

Another day dawned, and the little body would soon be taken from her and consigned to its last resting place.

At breakfast a telegram arrived from Mrs. Newberry, full of anxious inquiries after the child. Dorothy read it, and a

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cold, hard smile curled her lips. She took a pencil and wrote on the back:

"My baby is mine no longer.
"DOROTHY."

"My dear Althea, will you see that this message is sent?" and she handed the paper to her friend and quietly left the room.

Lady Althea took it and read what was written on both sides of the paper, and great tears gathered in her tender eyes and rolled down her cheeks.

"How sad and desolate some wives are!" she thought.

Before lunch a message came from Sir Richard, and read as follows:

"Sorry for your fears concerning the child, but feel sure you are unnecessarily alarmed. I would go to you at once, were it not that I feel certain the child is better by this time. You were always full of fears for the boy, you know. A letter follows.
"RICHARD MELVILLE."

Dorothy read it through twice, then handed it to her friends.

"Yes, he is right; the child is better," and there was a light in her eyes they had never seen there before. "Will you please answer this for me, dear?" she asked, with an appealing glance at Lady Althea. "There need be no explanations or details given. They would make tiresome reading, I have no doubt. Merely state the facts."

Dorothy could not help thinking how different Max Eager would have acted under like circumstances. Had he been the father of her child, she would not have been left to weep alone for her lost darling. A husband's love and tender sympathy would have supported her through this trying ordeal.

For long hours after that heartless message had reached her she paced the floor in her own room, only leaving it now and then to look upon the still, calm face of her lost darling.

While the mother was plunged in deepest sorrow, the father was whispering words of love and devotion into the ears of Lady Betty.

While the mother stood broken-hearted by the coffin of her little dead child, the father sat by the blue rippling waters of sunny Naples, a soft white hand clasped lovingly in his, while burning words of love and constancy fell from his lips. He had forgotten wife and child, and was only conscious of a mad longing to possess the beautiful siren by his side.

"I can never quite understand how she succeeded in tempting you into such folly. You must have been mad," Lady Betty was whispering softly in his ear.

"You are right. It was folly—mad, unreasonable folly! But I must do her the justice to say she did not tempt me into the marriage—it was her mother who did that. Dorothy never cared for me, and she was honest enough to let me see she did not."

"Oh, to be sure! Your beautiful and accomplished wife could never be otherwise than honest. You are to be congratulated, Sir Richard, on having such a virtuous and honest wife. She could never, for instance, be guilty of unwifely thoughts of another man—not even of Max Eager," went on Lady Betty, with a low, mocking laugh.

"Oh, that young fool! She don't care sixpence for him, or any one else. It is not in her nature to do so. But why let us speak of her. You know I hate her, and would give all I possess to be free," he said moodily, tightening his clasp on the slender white fingers.

"Which I fear you never will be. Lady Melville is too shrewd a woman to give you the necessary grounds for divorce. Not that she is any better than the rest of us, but she is more clever in concealing it."

"No, Dorothy will never give me the necessary grounds for a divorce. Yet I will manage it somehow. I am getting desperate. If she were only less cold and reserved we might manage it."

"Lady Melville is neither cold nor reserved with Mr. Eager. I have watched them together. When with him, the whole expression of her face changes. I know love when I see it, and Lady Melville and Max Eager are lovers. They always were, and always will be."

"You are sure of that?" Sir Richard asked eagerly. "If I thought——"

"You needn't think anything about it. I am telling you the truth. All London knows that Max Eager adores Dorothy, and it is apparent to all that she is not indifferent to his attentions."

Little Dick had lain in his grave for many weeks ere Richard returned to the Grange. He made but a brief stay. He hated the quiet restfulness of the quaint old place, and went yachting with a party of friends.

To Peel Off Freckled, Tanned or Muddy Skin

(*From Society World*)

To remove tan, muddiness, freckles, pimples, blotches or any complexion difficulty, the best thing to do is to remove the skin itself. This is easily, painlessly and inexpensively done by the application of ordinary mercolized wax, procurable at any drug-store. The wax peels off the defective outer skin, a little each day, gradually bringing the cutis or second layer of skin to the surface. The pores are unclogged and the face breathes in the life-giving oxygen. The new skin is beautifully soft, clear and white, bearing the healthy glow of youth.

Just apply the wax as you would cold cream, only not rubbing it in. In the morning wash it off with warm water. It's the most effective treatment known for a soiled, discolored or aged complexion.

"There was no use crying over spilt milk," he said philosophically. "Moping to death in that dismal old place would not bring the child back again. Of course, if Dorothy preferred it, he was willing for her to remain there, but he could not endure the place. If Dorothy did not mind he would go yachting for a few weeks. Lady Betty and a few intimate friends were going, and it would be an excellent recreation before going to London again."

So Dorothy was once more left alone in the quiet old Grange. Lady Althea returned to London, hoping that if Dorothy were alone Sir Richard would remain with her, and that together with their sorrow they might grow to know each other better.

Dorothy's letters were not frequent, but every line was pregnant with grief and despair. Lady Althea read, and her tender heart ached. She at once decided to go to her friend. Such letters could only come from a heart that was broken, a spirit crushed.

One bright autumn day, as twilight was gathering, Lady Althea arrived at the Grange. She had expected to see Dorotny changed, perhaps thin and pale; but she was shocked at the ravages a few weeks had made in the beautiful face.

Each day her sorrow seemed to grow deeper and more intense. Even all Lady Althea's tenderness and gentle sympathy could not thaw the ice about her heart. All emotions, all tender feelings, seemed chilled and frozen. Lady Althea was puzzled by this new side to her friend's character. There was something in that sad, pale face that spoke not so much of natural grief as of unnatural restraint. She had something the expression of one holding the lid close, not daring to let go.

She only half comprehended her friend in her present state, for she could not know that Dorothy was filled with a vague terror of herself, now that her one safeguard had been swept away. She was like a disabled bark on a storm-tossed sea, and could see the jagged rocks just ahead, which meant certain destruction.

Lady Althea stayed with Dorothy all through that dreary winter. She could not bring herself to leave her alone in her terrible grief and loneliness.

The dreary months passed slowly by, but Sir Richard did not come to the Grange. At long intervals a short, curt letter reached the lonely wife, but her husband never spoke of coming home. In the society columns of the Times they noted that he and Lady Betty were seen much together.

Mrs. Newberry wrote frequently, but had never come to the Grange since little Dick's death. There was something so chilling and formal in Dorothy's polite replies that she decided it would be wiser to defer meeting for the present.

Max Eager had written a sympathetic letter, but she had sent him no line. She dared not. His presence, his sympathy, his tender consideration, would have been a dangerous comfort. She longed for a word, a look, yet she sternly denied herself. She felt that she was not strong enough just yet. She must steer clear of the rocks and shoals. Her safety lay in deep water.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Butting In.

"How did work go today?" asked Mrs. Fleetwood.

"About as usual," replied Fleetwood. "Perhaps that does not express it right, either. The office force in our office hasn't, in the aggregate, as much sense as nature gives a goose!"

"You astonish me. I always thought you had an exceptionally bright and clever lot of men in your office."

"You thought wrong. Of all the incompetent, wretched, sissyfied mutts in the world our office has the cream. They have been the limit today. There's a new girl in the president's office, a perfect little peach, with large pansy-brown eyes, and the president went away after having merely shown her where the typewriter was and having given her the model for a huge bunch of circular letters he wanted her to get out.

"In consequence, our office force was butting in there every two minutes during the day and not giving the poor child a chance to do anything. Goodrich went in there every minute, and would come out with a smile on his face looking like the cat that ate the canary, and would sit with his eyes rolled up at the ceiling, letting his work go to thunder, until he thought of another excuse for going in there. As soon as he would come out Parkins would go in; as soon as Parkins came out, Tolliver would have his turn and then it would be Goodrich's turn again, with the office boy on the job all the time.

"It was absolutely sickening. How grown men, married men, fathers of families, can be such fools about a pretty face is beyond me."

"It must have been a trying day, but now you are at home and can forget it. The president will probably be back tomorrow, and they won't dare butt in while he is there."

"No, nobody will dare butt in while he is there!"

"You don't seem to be very well pleased about it!"

"Of course, I am not pleased about it. Do you suppose I want to see them making fools of themselves?"

"Where were you this afternoon?"

"I was at the office. Where should I be?"

"In whose office?"

"In my own office, of course! Why?"

"I telephoned you about half a dozen times at intervals of half an hour, because I wanted to come to town and wanted to meet you, and every time, except once, I failed to get any answer at all, and on that single occasion the office boy told me that you were either out or were in some other part of the building, and that you hadn't been in your office much of the time today."

"Well, that office boy is a little prevaricator! I was in my office all day except once or twice when I went into the president's office to show the stenographer something about her typewriter which she did not quite understand, it being a later model than she was used to."

"Oh, you poor thing! I see!"

* * *

SHOPPING.

A lady ambles to a store
  To buy a spool of thread.
At first she looks at hats galore
  Then carving knives and bread.

From there she travels to the aisle
  Where davenports are kept,
And then she lingers for a while
  Around the ribbon dept.

She looks at frying-pans and lace,
  Inspects the latest books.
She prices lotions for the face
  And linen goods and hooks.

And when she's canvassed all the joints,
  And clerks are nearly dead,
She brings the matter to a point
  And buys a spool of thread.

25 Cents Postpaid

Look at it! Have you ever seen a bigger bargain? Send for this superb waist. Examine it—see if it's not a regular 59c value—then if you are not satisfied, return it and we will refund your money. This is only one of many extraordinary new bargains we offer. This newest style waist is made of

Order Today good quality sheer voile richly embroidered. The beautifully embroidered front panel is outlined on either side with filet lace of dainty design. Fashionable low neck trimmed with combination lace. Three-quarter length sleeves, neatly trimmed in cuff effect with clusters of narrow tucking. Fastens invisibly down the back with pretty pearl buttons. Sizes 32 to 44 in. bust measure. Color, white only. We pay postage. Order today. **Be sure to state size.** Order by No. 2215A8. Now only **25c**

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$300 Monthly for You!

I want square men and women to act as my Special Sales representatives in every county. I want hustling, energetic, ambitious persons, anxious to make big money, who are willing to work with me. I want to show YOU how to MAKE $300 PROFIT and EXPENSES EVERY MONTH. I want to show YOU how to make more money easier, quicker, more sure and certain than you ever did before in all your life. I want you to **advertise, sell and appoint local agents for the most sensational seller in 50 years**—the startling invention that has set the entire country agog—

The Robinson Folding Bath Tub

Here's an absolutely new invention. Nothing else like it. Has taken the entire country by storm. Solves the bathing problem. Gives every home a modern, up-to-date bathroom in any part of the house. No plumbing, no waterworks needed. Take full length baths in any room; up stairs, down stairs, bed room, sick room, parlor, kitchen, any room in the house. **The Robinson Tub folds in small roll,** handy as an umbrella. Rivals expensive bathroom. Constructed of the wonderful "Steeline" material. I tell you it's GREAT! Remember it is needed in every home. Means modern bathing facilities for all the people. A godsend to humanity.

I want you to handle your county. I'll furnish demonstrating tub on a liberal basis. I'm positive, yes, I'm absolutely certain that you can make bigger money in a week with me than you ever made in a month before. Hustlers, east, west, north, south, are simply coining money. Orders, orders, everywhere. For remember, fully 70% of the people have no bathrooms. You can take the orders right and left. Quick sales and immense profits. 2 sales a day means $300 a month profit. Stop and realize the tremendous possibilities. Look around you. Be amazed. Your neighbors, friends, relatives, have no bathrooms. They are eager for one; never had the opportunity to install one. You step in; show the tub. Sale's made, profit sure.

No Experience Needed

Why, I don't care if you never sold anything before in all your life, you can make good big money with me. You're honest? You're square? Of course you are. You've got grit, ginger, gumption? Of course you have. You want to make good? You want to make big money? Sure you do. Well, that's all I ask. If you are willing to do your best, backed by my co-operation and help, you can blast out the biggest financial success of your career. I grant credit, you know so money can't hold you back. I furnish sample on liberal plan. I help you out and back you up. So don't let doubt drag you back. You have nothing to lose. My other men are building homes, starting bank accounts. So can you!

Exclusive Territory 100% Profit

Demonstrating Tub Furnished

FOLDED

Sensational Sales Success!

What others are doing YOU can do. Read these records. N. T. Smith, Ohio, $30 weekly profit. Meyers, Wis., $250 first month. Beasley, Nebr., $35 profit first 4 hours. Newton, Calif., $60 in 3 days. Mathias, Florida, $120 in 2 days. Corrigan, N. Y., $114 in 60 hours. C. H. Tremor, Ind., $35 profit in 6 hours. W. F. Hincard, New Mexico, $35 in 2 days. Average men, average sales, average towns. Undeniable Proof of the Big Money to be made by hustlers everywhere. The Robinson Tub is badly wanted and eagerly bought.

Customers' Words of Praise

See how pleased these people are. "Delighted with Tub; will recommend it," Mrs. Jennie Hall, Miss. "Bath Tub O. K. Just right size," Wm. Benz, Ohio. "Our Tub has been in daily use. Fine," Mrs. J. E. Randall, N. Y. "Have been using your Tub. Could not do without it," Mrs. G. C. Money, Iowa. "Robinson Tub first class," Chas. A. Massie, Wash. "Tub arrived. Children and all delighted," O. R. Loucks, La. "We all took a bath. It sure is a daisy, O. L. Morris, Ore. "After testing your Tub can say it surely is a wonder and gives entire satisfaction," O. P. Morgan, Ohio.

Mail This Coupon TODAY

Yes, sign this coupon right now. Don't send me a single penny. Don't send me any return postage. Don't send me any remuneration at all. Just sign and mail the coupon. That is all I ask. By sending the coupon you give me the chance to prove every word I have said. Let me prove every statement. Let me tell you the whole enthusing, ambition-awakening story of a tremendous world-wide success. Will you do this? Of course you will. Sign and mail the coupon NOW!

H. S. ROBINSON, Pres.

The Robinson Cabinet Mfg. Co.
375 Factories Bldg., TOLEDO, OHIO.
Walkerville, Ontario, Canada

Guaranteed for 10 Years! Cannot Leak

Every Robinson Folding Bath Tub that leaves our factory is guaranteed for ten years against any defect in manufacture. This is due to the remarkable invention, "Steeline," the material used in the construction of the Robinson Folding Bath Tub. Constructed with this material the tub can be, and is guaranteed for 10 years. Should it prove defective a new tub is immediately furnished in its place. This guarantee protects every customer for a period of 10 years. Steeline makes the tub soft and pliable, yet strong and lasting. The tub cannot spill, tip nor splash. Just as strong and durable in use as the ordinary enameled tub, but in convenience so far superior. In buying the Robinson Tub, customers take absolutely no risk. They are guaranteed against defects by our liberal, binding guarantee. Families everywhere boost the Robinson Tub to their friends which makes the sales come fast and sure for our representatives. Surely the ideal bathing equipment without one objectionable feature.

Empties Itself

Remember this: The Robinson Folding Bath Tub, equipped with our special Outlet Emptying Device makes the tub positively self-emptying. How convenient and handy this is. After the bath no fuss and bother, emptying the tub. By the time you're dressed the tub is emptied ready to lay away. All the conveniences of a modern, up-to-date bathroom, and yet the Folding Tub does not take up space or be in the way when not in use. No special room need be set aside as a bathroom unless desired. Any room can be made into a bathroom in 5 minutes time. Is it any wonder users are delighted and agents are enthusiastic? The Robinson Folding Bath Tub demonstrates its value immediately upon showing. It is the ideal bathing equipment for every home, city, country or town, for camping, etc., as well as the one desirable tub for the sick-room, bed-room, parlor, living room or kitchen, any room can be made into a bathroom in a jiffy. All this without plumbing, water works or extra expense. After the initial cost there are no further expenses to pay. Every home everywhere is just waiting for the Robinson Folding Tub.

H. S. Robinson, Pres.
Robinson Cabinet Mfg. Co.
375 Factories Bldg., Toledo, O.

$300 a month looks good to me. Write me and tell me all about your special plan and how I can make this big money acting as your representative. This obligates me in no way.

Name..

Street and No..................................

Town...

State..

Uninterrupted.

Now baseball chat is on parade,
With wit and sapience profound.
The season's short in which it's played,
But it is talked the whole year 'round.

An Apt Interne.

Nurse—"Heavens, doctor, patient No. 22 has swallowed his thermometer."

Young Doctor—"If his temperature rises above 104 give him an emetic."

WILLIE SHOWS TEACHER

Forced on Him.

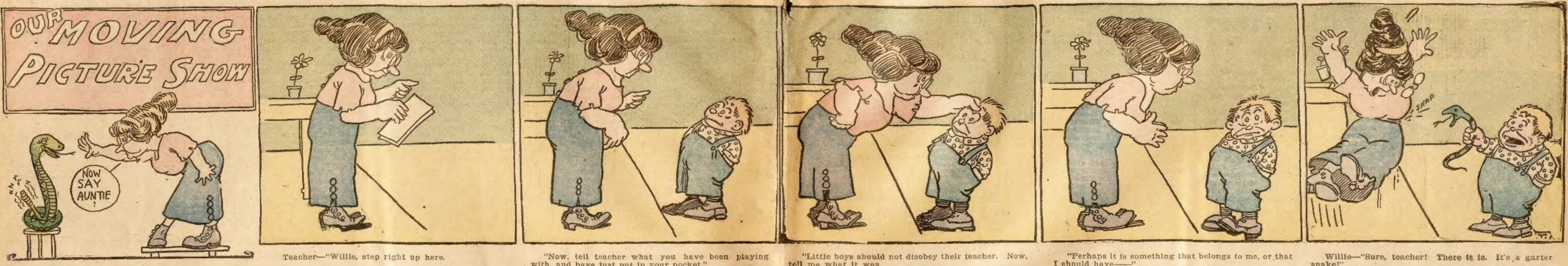
"What a fine library you have."

"Yes," replied Mr. Cumrox. "The architect said the house wouldn't be complete without one."

No Chance.

"It is so seay to hide yourself in this vast world," sighed the Old Fogy.

"Not if you have a few creditors," remarked the Grouch.



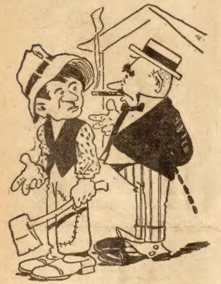
Teacher—"Willie, step right up here.

"Now, tell teacher what you have been playing with, and have just put in your pocket."

"Little boys should not disobey their teacher. Now, tell me what it was.

"Perhaps it is something that belongs to me, or that I should have——"

Willie—"Sure, teacher! There it is. It's a garter snake!"



Home Town Visitor—"Well, well! What became of old Bill Summers? Bill sure was a daredevil."

Lew Hike—"Bill sure was. He married three times before he died."

* * *

The Happy Mean.

There is a happy mean in everything. It is said that a shrewd old lady heard her married daughter say: "If my husband doesn't do such and such a thing, he'll find himself in hot water."

"My child," said the old lady, "a man is like an egg. Kept in hot water a little while he may boil soft, but keep him there long and he hardens!"

* * *

Heard on the Train.

"Not married yet! Why, I heard months ago that you were engaged to a certain young lady in Malden."

"No. I was engaged to an uncertain young lady in Malden, and that's why I'm not married."

THE TELEPHONE.

Whenever mother telephones
She talks about a lot of things,
So father only sits and groans
Whenever anybody rings.
"The season's earlier this year."
"I haven't got my new straw hat."
"I can't, because my child is here."
"What did her husband say to that?"

And father only says, "Hello!"
And takes the 'phone up in his hand,
"Is that you, Hawkins? This is Snow.
I wired Chicago. Understand?
I think our man intends to fight.
But we can best him if we try.
You'd better do so, then, tonight.
See you tomorrow. Well, good-by."

And sister says, "Oh, is that you?"
And then she fixes up her hair,
'S if anybody could see through.
"Oh, I don't know. Oh, I don't care."
"I think I can, if you insist."
"And wasn't yesterday a dream?"
"There's seven on the waiting list."
"I do love strawberry ice cream."

* * *

An Optimist's Epitaph.

The Carlsbad invalid has ordinarily a surprisingly robust appearance. He looks strong—scoffers say he has to be, to live through the rigors of the cure. A serious tribute has already been paid to the virtues of Carlsbad waters, so it may be permissible to quote the anecdotes of the light-minded. There is an apocryphal legend of an epitaph in a Carlsbad churchyard:

I was well.
I hoped to be better.
Here I am!

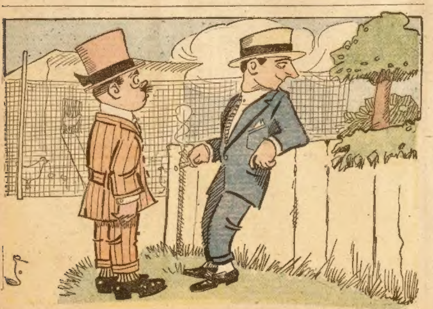
* * *

Making of a Financier.

The lesson was in multiplication and the teacher sought to impress upon little Johnny that three times two and two times three amounted to the same thing.

"Now," she said, "if you could have two bags with three oranges in each, or three bags with two oranges in each, which would you choose?"

"The three bags with two oranges in each," replied Johnny, without hesitation; "then I'd have one more bag to bust."



Binks—"How's Dobson making out raising chickens?"

Jinks—"Very well—very well! He's pretty near got to the point where he can afford to eat one himself!"

A Sure Test.

Noted Detective (at friend's house)—"This guest of yours, who, you say, came to you with such flattering letters of introduction, is an impostor."

Friend—"Impossible! He is one of the most cultured gentlemen I ever met."

"True! but, all the same, he is not what he pretends to be. He claims to be a man of family, a householder, and in business in a small town."

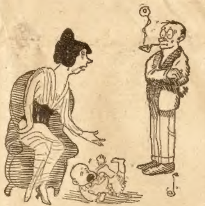
"Yes. Is he not?"

"No, he does not live in any home of his own; he is used to hotels and boarding houses."

"How do you know?"

"Before beginning a meal he wipes his plate off with his napkin."

* * *



Mrs. Benham—"Baby wants his own way, but I won't give it to him."

Benham—"Give him mine; I have never had it."

* * *

A Poet's Easy Time.

Mother—Do you mean to tell me that your husband is out half the time until after midnight?"

Daughter—"More than half."

"And you never scold?"

"Never."

"I am amazed."

"You forget that my husband is a poet."

"What of that, pray?"

"When he comes home early, he always insists on reading his poems to me."

* * *

Read the Newspapers.

Wise Father—"My son, if you would succeed in life, you must form two good habits: First, you must always attend strictly to your business; and, second, you must subscribe for a newspaper, and read it every day."

Son—"Why should I take a newspaper?"

Wise Father—"Because if you are not known as a newspaper reader, you will be constantly called away from your business to serve on juries."

* * *

The Test.

Mrs. Newrich (who has advertised for a Christmas pianist)—"So you are the music teacher that answered my advertisement?"

Pianist—"Yes, ma'am."

Mrs. Newrich—"Well, sit down and play a couple of duets, so that I can see what you can do."

* * *

The Gnat and the Gnu.

"How absurd," said the gnat to the gnu,
"To spell your queer name as you do!"
"For the matter of that,"
Said the gnu to the gnat,
"That's just how I feel about you."

A Vengeful Public.

Mrs. Ambition (anxiously)—"Well, my dear, were you elected?"

Mr. Ambition (despondently)—"I was overwhelmingly defeated, buried in oblivion; got only one vote, and that I cast myself."

"Dear me! What happened?"

"The people found out that I used to be an elevated road gateman."

The Tango.

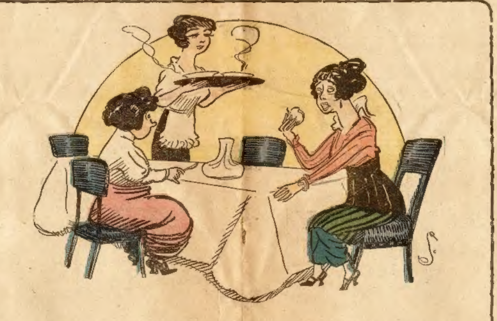
"Dat tango, boss, am sort of a easy motion. Ye jis go a-stealin' along easy like ye didn't have any knee joints and wuz walkin' on eggs that cost 40 cents.

The Horrid Thing.

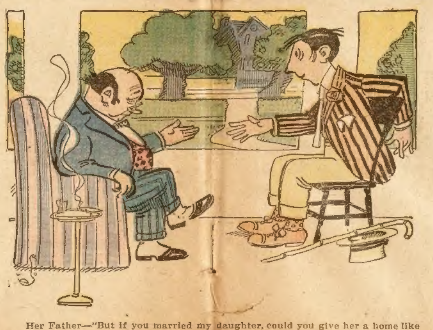
May (indignantly)—"I don't care; I think Harry Esterleigh is downright mean."

Marie—"Why?"

May—"Well, he wrote me from Egypt, saying he had shot a crocodile seven feet long, and that when he shot another he would have a pair of slippers made for me. I'll never speak to him again."



The Old Boarder—"Don't let any one beat you to the first table."
The New Boarder—"Why? Don't they leave enough for the second table?"
The Old Boarder—"They don't even leave a clew as to what they had."



Her Father—"But if you married my daughter, could you give her a home like this?"

Arthur—"All but the mortgages, sir—those, too, would come in time, I hope!"

The Public Remembered.

Street Car Superintendent—"A friend of mine rode a long distance on your car last night without paying fare, and he knows of others who got through free."

Conductor—"It's so. The car was so crowded that I got wedged into a corner and couldn't move an inch."

Superintendent—"H'm! That won't do. We must try to accommodate the public, and put on more cars."

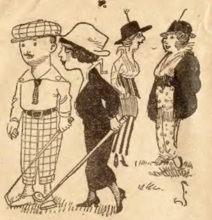
* * *

No Kissing Likely.

Mr. Grubbs (ten p. m.)—"I hate to go to sleep, knowing that a strange young man is down in the parlor with our daughter."

Mrs. Grubb—"Don't you worry. We had onions tonight, you know."

* * *



Mrs. Nextdoor—"I admire your daughter so much. She has such buoyant spirits."

Mrs. Tungtwist—"Yes, she's been crazy about boys ever since she wore short skirts."

* * *

Nature.

"Behold that exquisite sunset!' he exclaimed. "Note the delicate flesh tints, the cream shades, the long dashes of vermilion and the almost living fire that leaps up from the sinking sun as from a fountain. Behold the framework of darkening skies and of deep green! Isn't it wonderful?"

His fair companion sighed heavily.

"You just bet it is!" she exclaimed. "It looks just like a great, big lobster salad!"

* * *

The Truthful Compositor.

"I hear the editor of the Argus is in bad with the church," said Binks.

"Yes," replied Jinks. "In the report of the services last Sunday it states that 'The choir then rendered the anthem: 'Lord Have Mercy on Us Miserable Singers,'"

* * *

Inventions That Sell.

Servant—"Two inventors want to see you, sir. One has a rapid-firing gun, warranted to kill fifty men in fifty seconds, and the other has a new patent life-saving apparatus."

Capitalist—"Show in the man with the gun. Kick the other fellow out."

* * *

A Rapid Holiday.

"Was your outing a success?"

"I suppose so," replied Mr. Growcher. "It was about the usual program as I have observed it. The merry party barely had time to eat lunch and then line up to be photographed before it was time to catch the train home."

TALK.

Talk about opera, music and art,
Talk about books if you must,
Talk of the tariff until men depart
And talk of the ways of a trust.
Talg about fishing for pickerel and bass
And talk, if you will, about pelf,
Talk about people you see as you pass,.
Talk of anything else but yourself.

* * *

Used to It.

The little, mild, bald man had settled down in the train to read, and, feeling drowsy after a trying day at business, fell asleep. On the hat rack above was a ferocious crab in a bucket, and, reaching the edge of the rack, it fell, alighting on the little man's shoulder, and grabbed his ear to steady itself.

All the passengers waited expectantly for developments, but all they heard was:

"Let go, Sarah! I tell you I've been at the office all the evening."

* * *

Pat's Reply.

A soldier crossing the barrack square with a pail met a sergeant, who noticed that Pat was wearing a very disreputable pair of trousers. Intending to report him for unsoldierly appearance, he stopped him and asked:

"Where are you going?"

"To get some water, sor," answered Pat.

"What, in those trousers?"

"No, sir; in the pail."

* * *

Nothing Else Necessary.

Girl—"You cad! Can it be true that you made a bet at your club that if you proposed to me I would accept you?"

Man—"Well, I've proposed. Will you?"

Girl—"How much did you bet?"—Judge.

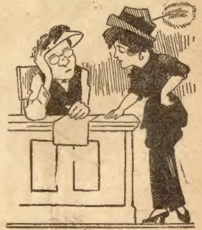
* * *

Wanted a Piano.

Wife—"We must have a piano."

Husband—"We are neither of us musical."

Wife—"I know; but what is home without a piano lamp?"



Kind Lady—"We're taking up a collection for the poor savages of Bugjug Island."

Man at Desk—"Are they suffering much, dear lady?"

Kind Lady—"Would you believe it, there's a town of 200 there that hasn't got a picture show in it yet."

* * *

A Vague Impression.

"I allus did speck we wus g'ineter hab osme kind o' botheration 'long o' deshere Democrats," said Erastus Pinkley.

"What's dey been doin'?" asked Miss Miami Brown.

"'Stid o' goin' 'long waitin' for plain old 4-11-44, dey's gettin' up some game dey calls 'foreign policy.'"

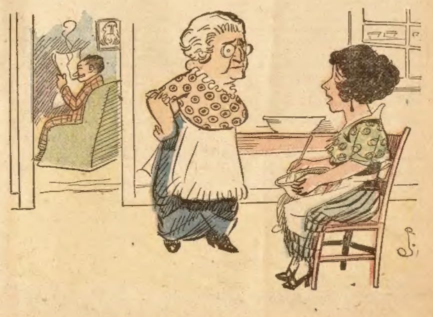
* * *

Condensed Tragedies.

"I frequently find my wife poring over that volume of sad fiction, the cook book."

"Why do you call it that?"

"Because not more than one in ten of those pieces come out right."



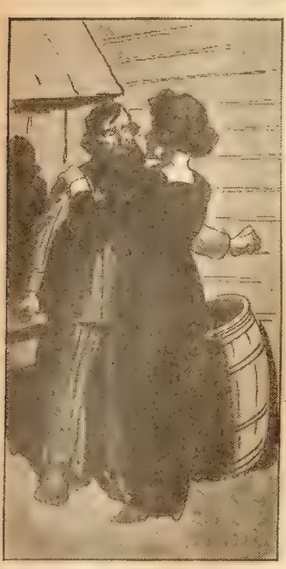
Mrs. Knagg's Mother—"Does Henry beat you?"

Mrs. Knagg—"Worse than that. I had a cold and couldn't speak for three weeks and when I learned the sign language he'd turn off the lights as soon as he came in the house."

Detective Keeneyes' Craft

Or, THE DELEMERE MYSTERY

By J. Breckenridge Ellis



"Infamous!" cried Mr. Bear.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

AROUND the house rushed the detective with his two companions. The window of Mr. Bear's bedroom, as the detective had of course observed when approaching the small hotel (for he saw everything), opened over the flat tin roof of a row of two rooms which had been added to the original building. At the side of the addition stood a long table on which were arranged a tub, a washboard, and various pans and pots and kettles which could find no space within. These utensils took common luck from sun and rain, dust of the street, and investigations of predatory cats.

Hardly had the three men (one of them looking so marvelously like a woman) rounded the house, when a figure which had crawled over the ledge of Mr. Bear's bedroom dropped upon the tin roof, and then, with some noise, down upon the table, and from that to the ground, and into the arms of him who now claimed to be Mrs. Bear.

"My own!" cried Keeneyes, embracing the pajama-clad figure. "Ought you to be out in the night in your bare feet? Do run back and get on your shoes. And better still, let me go with you to your chamber."

"Infamous!" cried Mr. Bear, tearing himself loose. "Woman, leave me alone. I know nothing about you."

"Wait!" Keeneyes grasped his arm and swung to it as Mr. Bear fought his way step by step out of the yard toward the road. "You are going to try to get away from your own persecuted and your much abused——"

"Madam," cried the other violently, "you have made a mistake——" He glared at Howard and Jensen and did not finish, evidently concluding that it was not a mistake but a conspiracy.

"I am Mrs. Bear," wailed Keeneyes, as they scuffled to the sidewalk.

"Well, that's nothing to me."

"Oh, good heavens!" shrieked Keeneyes, in a high falsetto. "Can it be possible that after all you are not Mr. Bear, my own Timothy?"

"For God's sake don't make so much noise," groaned Mr. Bear.

"Noise!" shouted Keeneyes, "I will make the cheeks of heaven crack wide open with my roaring. You are my own Timothy—I know you—I know this beloved beard——" With that he pulled the false whiskers from the other's face.

"It's Mr. Delemere!" gasped Howard, recoiling.

"Here!" shouted Jim Tibbs from his doorway, "all that racket must be stopped—my guests are complaining. Take your Mr. Bear and begone." He slammed the door vindictively.

"Woman," gasped Mr. Delemere, in desperation, "you see I am not whom you pretended—let me go!"

"It is not Mr. Bear!" sighed Keeneyes. "Well, I am not Mrs. Bear. I am a detective, Mr. Delemere, and if you will go with us quietly, perhaps I can be of some assistance in finding your daughter.

"Mr. Delemere," exclaimed Jensen, "why do you try to break loose from your best friends?"

Mr. Delemere finding it impossible to loosen the detective's grip upon his arm, looked about wildly as if hoping for rescue. His face was pale and haggard, his eyes wild.

"Will you come without resistance?" Keeneyes demanded, intense of tone.

Mr. Delemere did not answer.

"Or shall I rouse the town to——"

"No, no, no, yes, I will go with you—anything but exposure. For heaven's sake don't let anybody else know! Give me the disguise!" he pleaded.

Keeneyes quietly restored the false beard, which Mr. Delemere assumed with trembling hands. "I will take your arm," said Keeneyes, calmly and skillfully looping his skirts in a graceful hand. "We will promenade. Jensen, you and Howard go on before, and we will follow you to the mill."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JENSEN and Howard obeyed, but though they walked in advance, neither felt in the least degree triumphant. Jensen respected as a citizen the character of Mr. Delemere, and Howard as the lover of his daughter, felt toward him something like reverence. Now they were forced into the attitude of policemen bearing off a prisoner; and though both were undeniably glad to know that he was alive and safe and near at hand, they felt that he was much incensed against them.

When they came to the street crossing, the detective paused and addressed his unhappy companion: "My dear sir, I am afraid if you walk with us all the way to the Jensen mill, your bare feet will be greatly bruised. Would you care to wait here until I can bring a carriage from the livery stable?"

Delemere grumbled something unintelligible.

"Mr. Delemere," said Howard, impulsively, "I assure you I am dreadfully sorry to interfere with your secret plans. But it wounds me deeply that you should not at all seem glad to see me, and will not shake hands after the terrible tragedy that has come upon us all."

"What tragedy?" snapped Mr. Delemere. "You mean the blowing up of my house?"

"Why, no, that is—only in a slight degree. The real tragedy, of course, is the disappearance of Miss Alice."

"The disappearance of WHO? demanded the other, in a louder voice

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" remonstrated the detective. "We cannot hold a parlor conversation on a street corner. And I now appeal to Mr. Delemere: Mr. Delemere, is it greatly to your interests that we release you?"

"Of course it is. Good heavens! By what right have you interfered?"

"Mr. Delemere," cried Jensen, desperately, "do you think it natural——"

"I don't think it natural to be compelled to tramp barefooted over the rocks and through mud to your mill!" Mr. Delemere snapped.

"But we find you in a disguise——"

"And whose business is it, if I am? Have I committed any crime? Have I wronged any one? Do you think I blew up my house? And if I did, wasn't it my house to do with as I pleased? You say you are a detective, sir. That is nothing to me. Come! Of what do you accuse me?"

"Mr Delemere," Howard reproached him, "this is very much unlike you."

"No, it isn't unlike me. You're mistaken there. It isn't unlike me because it is me. And I challenge the three of you to name the crime of which I am accused."

"We do not accuse you of anything."

"Then why arrest me?"

"We do not arrest you. Only it seems natural——"

"Natural?" snorted Mr. Delemere. "I look natural, no doubt, here in my pajamas, with bare feet!"

"Mr. Delemere," said Keeneyes, "you are at liberty. Go where you please."

"What! You do not mean to follow me?"

"No. You object so strongly to confiding anything to us that we will detain you no longer."

"But—" Jensen remonstrated.

"We will detain you no longer," Keeneyes repeated firmly.

"Is it wise," Howard asked, "after so long a chase and after so many difficulties——"

"We will detain you no longer," Keeneyes persisted, "and as Mr. Tibbs has locked the door on you, perhaps you'd better climb back to your bedroom—you can easily do so my means of the table and the low roof. Dress yourself, sir, and go forth freely—or, if you prefer, return to bed. Come, Howard; come Jensen; let us leave Mr. Delemere his liberty of which he is so fond. Good night, Mr. Delemere—or Mr. Bear. Good night."

Mr. Delemere without waiting to hear any more words (of which the detective seemed full to running over) rushed to the pine table, and shinned the weatherboarding to the tin roof—thence disappeared through his bedroom window, which came down with a vicious bang.

"Was this wise?" Howard complained. "We have let him go, and all our trouble is for nothing; we may never see him again—for he seems to have quite lost his mind."

"However," said the detective, as he started over the street crossing, obliging them to follow, "we have by no means wasted our time. We have learned something of immense importance."

"We have!" Jensen ejaculated.

"From whom?" demanded Howard.

"From Mr. Delemere, of course; we learned everything of importance we need know; that's why I let him go; we have no further use for him."

"But what did we learn?" Howard objected.

"My dear fellow, you heard his words as clearly as I did."

"Yes, but I heard no words that told me anything."

"They told me a great deal. Speak cautiously and I will elucidate. But first, let me ask you a few questions, Howard, as an expert abductor—or rather, as an amateur in that line. Go with me in thought back to the fateful night when you, and your brother, Judge Whittleby, and the giant named Snaggs, carried off Miss Alice. But let me throw out as a side remark that doubtless you recognized in Mr. Delemere the man who was spying on us in the miller's cottage—the man you ran after. No? Well, recall his figure. As I watched him running from Jensen's window, I saw him farther than you; saw him take the direction of the railroad hotel, therefore expected to find the very man we have found—that is, Jim Tibbs' new guest; of course, I didn't know it was Delemere, but I was sure it must be your mysterious man with the whiskers."

"His figure certainly resembles the man we were chasing. Still——"

"Resembles the man? Why, he is the man. Come, come, let us get to something important. Go back to the night of the kidnaping. It was a very dark night, and the deed——"

"The crime," Jensen murmured.

"——Was done at the darkest time of this very dark night. Very good. Leaving your brother to hold the horse in the alley, you and Snaggs both climbed the ladder to the bedroom. Now, did you go together?"

"No," said Howard, his tones showing with what reluctance he revisited in memory the hated scene. "No. I was first to make her unconscious, then to signal Snaggs to come up. I went into the room; he stayed at the foot of the ladder."

"As I supposed. Now, in a deed of this sort, a light would be handy; but I imagine, being strictly an amateur, you carried no dark-lantern?"

"Certainly not; I have never had a dark-lantern in my life, and up to some days ago, never saw one."

"Good! Excellent! When you threw your leg over the sill and sneaked across the floor, you were careful not to wake the fair sleeper. Did you stumble?"

"Not once."

"Knock against anything? Make any noise?"

"No, I was very lucky."

"She was sound asleep all this time?"

"She was; I could hear her regular breathing. I saturated my handkerchief with chloroform as I stood beside her pillow. She quietly passed from natural to artificial sleep."

"Did you strike a match, later, before wrapping her up like a bundle?"

"I did not. In fact, Mr. Detective, there was something about the whole thing so distasteful to me—going by stealth into a young lady's room at midnight—standing there with her so helpless—no, even if it had been moonlight, I should not have liked to look at her under the circumstances. It would have seemed unmanly."

Jensen snorted contemptuously.

"Just so; a very laudable feeling on your part and highly to be commended. When she lay perfectly unconscious, perfectly still, you tied a white cloth about her face—a large one?"

"Yes, a very large white silk scarf."

"What was your signal to Snaggs?"

"I stepped to the window. Though Snaggs was standing at the foot of the ladder, I couldn't see him. I rapped upon the head of the ladder three times, not very loud. Then he came up—got Miss Alice—carried her down, put her on

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the horse—I was with him all this time—and——"

"And your brother carried her away, though out of consideration for him you say it was you who did this. Did your brother know Miss Alice?"

"No, he had never seen her. Anyway, I had her face completely hidden."

"When he took her to Cedarville and left her in the basement room, did he remove that white scarf?"

"He did not. He simply left her hands free so she could release herself."

"Then your brother never has seen Miss Alice?"

"No."

"Nor Snaggs?"

"He hadn't up to that night. God knows what has happened since. If Snaggs is entirely innocent of any treachery, why has he hidden himself ever since?"

"Possibly he's afraid of being hung," snapped Jensen. "In Missouri, you can be hung for kidnaping. Maybe he's scared. Or, maybe he has a conscience."

"Maybe you're an old Pharisee yourself," retorted Keeneyes. "When it comes to 'maybe' and 'maybe,' you can suppose anything. Have you been following very closely the way in which I have put my questions? Have you understood my method?"

"Your method seems simple enough," returned Howard, smarting under Jensen's insult, and venting his ill-humor on the detective. "Any child could ask questions."

Keeneyes was nettled. "You think my method is simple. You think it suited to children. Well, well, lucky I have children as my auditors. Why, good heavens, Howard! haven't you noticed that not once have I mentioned Miss Alice's name? And yet I have been asking most intimate questions concerning the abduction."

"What of that?"

"It is simply my subtle way of informing you that I am at sea as to the abduction."

"I[illegible] at sea? I think I have told you pretty fully all about it."

"You haven't informed me whom it was you abducted."

"[illegible] I have said that Miss A[illegible]—"

"[illegible] said a thousand things. I used the word 'informed.' You have given no true knowledge as to whom you abducted."

"You know that we abducted Miss Alice Delemere."

"Oh, no, by no means! I can't imagine who was carried off, but I do know that it was not Miss Alice Delemere."

Howard stopped, rooted to the sidewalk—they had by this time reached the blackened ruins of what had been the Delemere residence, whither Keeneyes, without their special observance, had been leading them.

"You did not see her," said Keeneyes, reasoning with him. "Come, come, Howard, by your own account it was too dark in the room for you to see her; and after she was in the yard, the cloth hid her face, and the bedclothes rolled around her effectually hid her form. You don't know who she was."

"But who should she have been? She was asleep in Alice's bed, in Alice's room—she was Alice."

"Oh, no! Oh, not at all!"

"But Mr. Keeneyes—Mr. Richard Zellers!—Mr. Detective!"

"No, no, it could not have been Miss Alice."

"But the next morning the family went to that very room to wake her up."

"Yes, yes, I know. But she was gone, not because she had been abducted, but because that night Miss Alice had not slept in her room. Did you not notice Mr. Delemere's amazement when you asked him about the disappearance of his daughter. He said 'WHO?' as if he thought you had lost your wits. That instant I divined that you had made a mistake in your kidnaping. You carried off somebody else; it is as clear as the noonday sun!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

FOR a while nothing further was said; the detective perhaps was too much pleased over the surprise he had given his companions—or it may have been he was waiting for them to grasp his astounding hypothesis. They went into the deserted yard, and as they approached the ruins of the Delemere house, Keeneyes suggested that they seat themselves in a corner where parts of the walls remained a few feet above ground, and decide upon the next move.

"You do not ask me why I have led you to the dynamited house," he remarked, "but whenever you have the least curiosity, speak up and I will tell you what we are about to do."

"You can hardly expect me to talk about anything but your absurd theory of the kidnaping," retorted Howard, at last finding his breath. "The supposition that it was not Alice whom we carried away is perfectly ridiculous."

"Oh, thank you!" said Keeneyes, ironically. "And I'll thank you more if you'll point out the grounds for your statement."

"They are self-evident. I found Alice asleep in her own bed——"

"You found somebody asleep in her bed—that is all you know."

"The next morning the family sent up to wake her, knowing she slept there."

"They supposed she slept there."

"Well, where was she, if she was not in that bed?"

"Ah, you have shifted your grounds."

"Somebody was carried off. Who was the one we kidnaped?"

"Still you wander from your original assertion. You have charged me with being ridiculous. Come, prove it. Answer this—would it call for a miracle for Alice to be sleeping away from home?"

"Without the knowledge of her parents? And without Edgar's knowledge? I should say little short of a miracle would be needed."

"Still, you will admit it wouldn't quite necessitate a miracle?"

"I assert that I consider it wholly incredible. The Delemere family were all very close companions, telling each other all their little secrets. And if it were possible to imagine that Alice slept away from home without the knowledge of her people, who then was occupying her bed? And why should a stranger take her place?"

"Then perhaps the family knew all the time that Alice was not up there."

"How so, when Edgar was first sent upstairs to waken Alice?"

"Ah—but that may have been for the benefit of the servants. The family [illegible] have pretended to think it was Alice in order to deceive the maid and the c[illegible]. They may have known all the time [illegible] it was a substitute for Alice. Since you say Alice did not keep secrets from them, I agree with you in thinking that if she had intended sleeping away from home and providing a substitute in her bed she would in all likelihood have told her family. Very good. Since it was not Alice whom you abducted—"

"But I tell you it was Ali[illegible]"

"Since it was not Alice, the family must already have warn[illegible] that she was about to provide a substitute. Well, this substitute did not come down to breakfast. Edgar is sent up to rouse her. But in referring to her—all for the benefit of the maid—she is referred to as 'Alice.'"

"But they even discussed Alice's habits; wondering why she didn't do as she was accustomed to do."

"Well, that might have been merely to baffle the servants. Or possibly Edgar was not in the secret. It may have been to deceive Edgar."

"But in all this fantastic fairy-tale, what possible motive can you invent? Why should Alice want a substitute? Why should they deceive Edgar? Wouldn't he learn the truth as soon as he knocked on her door? Your strange theory doesn't hang together at any one point. It is all absurd. And I must confess, Mr. Detective, that I am woefully disappointed in your acuteness."

"Gentlemen," said the detective, "would you object to sitting quietly in this spot while I examine the ruins? The air is balmy, the town is asleep, and I should like to make a thorough examination of the grounds before daylight, as I do not care to set the town to wondering why a strange woman should be prowling about the Delemere ruins. Will you wait here for me?"

"Of course we will wait," said Howard, "and if you can make a discovery at this place that has escaped the attention of the entire community you will indeed prove yourself a wonderful man."

"I've already proved myself that," retorted Keeneyes. "I have offered you a hypothesis which nobody else has even thought of. If you had not employed me as your detective, do you think it likely that anybody would have told you that it was not Miss Alice who was carried away?"

"I fancy not," said Howard, ironically. "And even you have failed to answer in regard to any possible motive."

"All in good time, all in good time. Now please keep still while I search here and there for clews."

It was approaching dawn when the detective returned to them. "We are now ready," he announced, "to go back to the miller's cottage. Mr. Jensen, you expect to work at your mill today, I presume?"

"Of course. Have you found out anything?"

"Would you object to my occupying a room at your cottage until night?"

"Certainly not. But what about the mystery?"

"As you and Howard are naturally very curious, we may talk about that as we now hurry along to your cottage."

"Yes," Howard agreed impatiently, "but did you find any clews?"

"My search has by no means been in vain; but we will not talk about that just at present. I want to question you concerning that barber whom you found in an old shack at the margin of the woods."

"It was Abe Deadening, a single man, whom everybody knows."

"The same. You found this barber in a demented condition in the old tumbled-down corncrib, and after your town physician, Dr. Smerll, had had him in charge for a few days, he recovered his wits. Now, nobody ever suspected that this Abe Deadening was counterfeiting madness, did they?"

"Certainly not. Why should he live as a wild beast in that fashion unless his mind was deranged?"

"I don't know; pray don't ask me. Very good! And in order to account for

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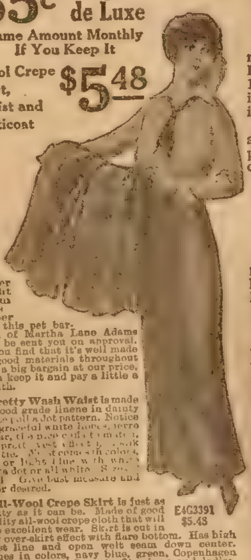

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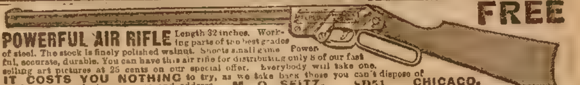

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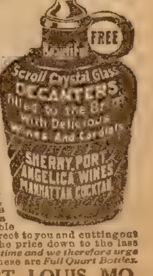

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his derangement, he told you that, while looking through a crack in the barn wall, he saw some one being kidnaped; and the next morning he learned that it was Miss Alice Delemere. Because he had not interfered in time to prevent the abduction, he felt himself responsible for Miss Alice's fate, and remorse drove him crazy. Am I right?"

"That is all right," Jensen agreed. "I heard him tell the story, and so did Howard."

"His account seemed perfectly natural, did it?"

"Sounded like gospel; he told us just why he went to the barn and all about it."

"Now, gentlemen, you know this Abe Deadening and I do not. But I want to make his acquaintance. I leave it to you in what way I had best meet him—whether as a detective, as a lady friend, or as a man about town. What I want to find out is this: Is that barber such a man as what we have just detailed would naturally drive insane? Gentlemen, it does not seem sufficient, in my mind, for these facts to drive crazy the kind of barbers with whom I have been thrown in contact."

"But, my dear sir——"

"Wait. He saw what he supposed a big practical joke—a hazing bee. The next morning, finding that the Delemere house has been blown up, he at once imagined that it was Miss Delemere who was kidnaped——"

"Everybody knew she had either been kidnaped or blown to atoms," said Jensen, "and Howard swears that she was abducted just as Deadening concluded."

"Well, let us suppose for the sake of the argument that she was abducted. How could it in any way be regarded as the barber's fault?"

"He was looking on."

"Yes, but he says he supposed it a students' prank."

"But the next morning he learned differently."

"Yes, that made him conclude that if he had interfered he might have saved Miss Alice. So, according to his story, his only fault was that he did not interfere at a time when he thought no interference necessary."

"That is true, but——"

"Wait. Now meditate on that fault, that sin of omission. Was it sufficient to drive a man crazy? Good heavens! Was he in love with Miss Alice, that he should take it so to conscience?"

"He in love with Alice!" ejaculated Howard. "Absurd!"

"Then why lose his wits about it?"

"Mr. [illegible], we do not have to find the whys for facts."

"No, but you must be sure what you call facts are facts. Only three conclusions are possible. First, Abe Deadening did not lose his mind at all, but merely pretended to do so for private reasons of his own; second, he is a barber of an amazing weakness of mind and uncanny strength of conscience; or, third, if he lost his wits, temporarily, it was not over what he testified to."

"What do you mean by that third alternative?"

"I mean that there is every likelihood that if he truly lost his wits, it was over something that he has not yet disclosed. That's why I want to meet him. There is a possibility that he knows who was abducted, for of course it was not Miss Alice Delemere. It is possible that if he knows who slept in Miss Alice's bed, he knows where she is now and what has happened to her, and what has become of your giant, Snaggs. In short, we must drain from Abe Deadening all that he knows, for evidently he has only skimmed off for the general public a small spoonful of the cream."

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Pete's Sacrifice.

In the door of his ranch house on a Western prairie, Pete Harker—known as Sorrel Pete—sat idly whistling and whittling when his old chum, Mac Towles, rode up the trail and stopped.

"Whoop!" shouted Pete. "Just look who's here! Haven't set eyes on you since you saved my life in that old flooded mine back yonder."

"No," agreed Mac; "and speaking of that, I'm right here now to remind you of the promise you made then; do you remember it?"

"Yes, sir! I 'lowed that any time you wanted anything off'n me, you'd get it, no odds what it was."

"Well, I want something now," confessed Mac, "but I'm most afraid I'm asking too much."

"Sho, I'll bet you ain't, no such thing. What is it? Come right out with it."

"Well, my wife and I want you to come over and marry our cook."

"Jinkins! Would she have me, s'pose?"

"Oh, there won't be any trouble about that. You're just the style she likes, and she isn't set on staying single."

"Jest listen to that! She's awful homely lookin'?"

"Not so bad."

"Kin she cook?"

"[illegible]"

"Well, I'm a bachelor man. I like women folks and good cookin' as well as any other lonesome old critter does, but where's the favor I'm doing you? Looks to me like it's all on the other foot—hey?"

"Pete, she's the worst-tempered woman that ever tackled a rolling pin. My wife don't dare go into the kitchen when the cook isn't feeling amiable, and I wouldn't hanker to, either. And she won't let us discharge her; we've tried that, but she just simply wouldn't have it. Our only hope's in marrying her off, and we thought of you—but I guess the sacrifice is too much to ask——"

"Sacrifice nothin'!" shouted Pete. "You hold on till I get a critter saddled, and I'll hike right home with you and marry the gal immejiate, if sh'll say the word. Things have been pesky quiet here lately; no fights nor nothin'; I need a little shakin' up. And anyhow, Sorrel Pete never goes back on a promise. If an old chum that saved my ornery life at the resk of his own makes a p'int of me marrying a cranky cook, I'll do it without battin' an eye. Come on!"

It is pleasant to be able to add that, barring a few interesting skirmishes, Pete and his wife, the ex-cook, are now jogging along in a very fair state of felicity.

* * *

Father's Ultimatum.

The father of a large family of children was trying hard to read the evening paper.

"What's that terrible racket in the hall, Martha?"

"One of the children just fell downstairs."

"Well," he replied, turning over another page of the paper, "you tell the [illegible] if they can't fall downstairs [illegible], they'll have to stop it."

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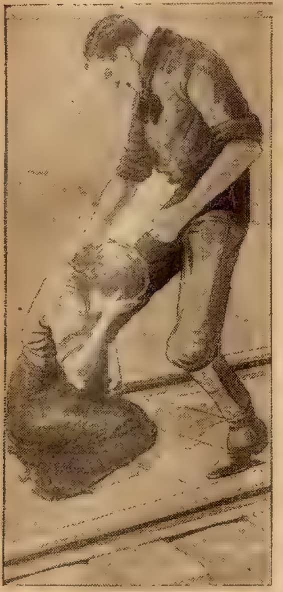
Out West Stories

RELIEF AT RELIEF

By Perry G. Estee



Raving crazy with fury.

FAR out on the western side of the Rockies there is a little telegraph block station from which the only scenery is an etching in dull brown and gray—sand and sagebrush—as far as the eye can reach.

Even the name is suggestive of what the first operator and all his brothers of the dot and dash fraternity have used as the subject of their first letters to the powers.

"Relief" is the name painted on the little two-room, one-story building. No passenger trains stop there and no freights, according to time card, but very often the two half-mile passing tracks are occupied by long "drags" stopped for "meets" by the imperative arm or gleaming red of the semaphore, high above the office.

Once in a great while the ornately varnished cars and mighty engines of the transcontinental trains are halted there for a "block," and while such occasions are treats for the lonely operators, they feel that even the uniformed darky porters look down upon them with scornful sympathy.

The two operators who had held the night and day tricks for two months, writing letters on alternate days to the chief dispatchers—letters in which the word "relief" figured often—solemnly shook hands and then did a twostep together through the ankle-deep sand to the dismounted box car which served as a residence for all operators. There they began to pack their personal possessions with unseemly haste.

Yet even their pleasure was lessened when they saw the relieving operators drop off the way-freight which had halted to leave them and to unload the two trunks and few boxes belonging to the new arrivals.

"Lunger, and far gone, too," said Lane, gazing back from the rear platform as the caboose rattled over the west switch.

"Poor devil!" said his brother operator, compassionately. "But he ought not to have brought that little wife to a prison to watch him die."

"That fellow and the wife both used to work in a telegraph office back East. Then the fellow went into newspaper work until the lung business drove him out here. Smart guy and mighty nice, and pretty little woman," said the conductor, joining them. "I'm going to bring my wife along some day and drop her off there to cheer 'em up a little."

"They'll need it, after two days of that place, say nothing about being sick," said Lane sourly.

But the lunger did not die, and when the Landrys had been at Relief nearly eleven months, Billy, as the trainmen called him now, was growing stronger day by day. Often he worked half of his wife's trick, noon until midnight, as well as his own hours. It would have perhaps been better if he had not. Those hours were but that many more in which she could now find no employment for mind or hand. With Billy sick, and herself obliged to work extra hours as well as care for him, she had been happy and contented; now the great reaches of unchanging view, unchanging sky, and the heat which seemed to become overpowering with the first rays of the sun and last until long after darkness had settled down—well, perhaps plain homesickness would cover it all, but she suffered and in silence—Billy was not yet well enough to go back. As for the man, when not on duty he sat for hours in the shade of the car, or wherever it seemed coolest, and pounded the keys of the old typewriter that had been one of the few possessions he had insisted upon retaining when the bad days came. Though she gave no sign, his work on the novel and his very optimism about it were added injuries in the now morbid mind of his wife.

Things take on strange perspectives when one is hungry just to see a little spot of green or a tree; yes, even one tree They were from Silver Creek, back in the Empire State. Poverty and duty held her silent

Then one night there was a call on the block line to the west; Snake Creek, another of the little block stations

"Who?" clicked the sounder. Something vaguely familiar in the touch on the wire thrilled the woman

"E. L.," she answered.

"Alone?" came the query.

"Yes," she tapped back

"This is R. B. I came by on the Limited three days ago, and while we waited for a moment, I saw your dear face from the window, and came back to headquarters and secured this night trick that I might at least chat with you. You're glad, aren't you, Elizabeth?"

In her fancy she could see Rob Bishop's dark, coaxing eyes, and almost catch the caressing notes of his voice in the metallic clack of his Morse. She knew she ought not to listen. They had been engaged in the old days before Billy came. She had discovered his unworthiness and cast him off. When later on his blind infatuation led him to seek her, she had promptly told Billy. What action her husband had taken, she never knew, but Bishop had annoyed her no more. Should she call Billy now?

"Say you're glad, Beth, and will talk with me sometimes," pleaded the man at Snake Creek.

Had the little brown-haired woman, trembling now over the key in the lonely telegraph shack, met Bishop amid normal surroundings, or when in her normal mind, she would not have vouchsafed a thought to the handsome but unprincipled man she had known years before.

But nothing was normal, and there was an enticing element of fascination about the stolen and secret visits, for a block wire is an isolated circuit between each station. Soon she came to watch eagerly for the call from Snake Creek—and she did not tell her husband of the coming of the new operator.

Later she consented to plan a set of signals so that she could warn the operator when her husband was in the office, or within hearing of the instrument, but she steadfastly refused to steal away while Billy was on duty and meet Bishop.

Relief, her heart was crying; relief from Relief, and slowly Bishop's tales of the life she had loved in the East, and which he promised she might again enjoy, only in greater degree, crept into her mind, and bit by bit wore away her scruples. He was rich now, he told her, and already sacrificing much that he might be near her; working, even as a night operator at a lonely desert station.

Then, too, Billy had seemed exultantly secretive of late, and that had irritated her. Not that he was less thoughtful of her; he would have worked the twenty-four hours if she would have allowed him, but the stolen-wire visits were by now so precious that she insisted on remaining her full hours.

"You've done your part," said the tempter. "You stayed with him through the worst of his trouble. You ought to have some life of your own."

Thus it came that Elizabeth promised to go with the man. The details were planned over the block wire, and it was all so simple and so very, very easy. Bishop was to have the gasoline track-speeder of the section foreman and come to Relief after dark of the first night he was sure the woman was on duty and Landry asleep. They would make a fast run with the little car to the junction twenty miles east, and there take one of the many trains, the first on either road, for the East—and happiness.

Elizabeth had kept her few clothes surreptitiously packed for two days before the right moment arrived. When opening the block circuit she gave the signal—and then would have given her right hand to have recalled what she had done.

Stripped of its romance in one blazing second, she saw what she had been about to do. She walked the floor with clinched hands and heaving breast. What would her husband say if she went to him now with her story? No, better to flee into the desert and keep going, going—anywhere that would take her away from the thoughts of the temptation to which she had been about to yield

As she threw open the door there was the soft rumble of wheels and the subdued racket of a gasoline engine.

"Come, darling!"

"You low-lived devil!" grated a savage voice.

Mingled with the sound of the heavy blow that followed the words there was a woman's scream.

"Get the lantern!" said the savage voice. "Get the lantern, I said!"

Meekly the woman obeyed. Her husband was speaking in a tone she had never heard from him before, and the face that showed in the dim light was that of a man stark, raving crazy with fury.

In helpless fear she leaned against the little telegraph building; saw him snap open the speeder tool box, take out the wire kept there for emergencies, and then with brutal roughness tie the unconscious man to the car.

"It may interest you to know that this man has a wife and child back East, and ran away because he could not support them, and is a thoroughgoing blackleg besides," her husband said, still in the tone that chilled her with fear.

"You didn't know that my novel was all that I had hoped, and that two days more was to have finished our stay in this hole? No? Well, I was going to tell you in the morning, and show you our passes home—we could have gone for a visit, anyway. I waited to see if you could really listen to this thing—and believe him, too. One thing, he'll look on your face no more, and unless the Lord wills different, on no woman."

Then, as he stooped, examining the engine with care, she saw what he contemplated.

"You heard Vinton station report extra 1205 west; five minutes ago. Do you want to say good-by to your lover?"

He leaned forward, and there was the whir of the starting engine. The lever was thrown at full speed, and as the speeder shot forward, he saw—too late to interpose—the woman rush forward from the building, and fling herself headlong upon it and cling to the unconscious body of the operator; and so the car passed from sight, racing to meet the death rushing westward in the darkness as fast as the eight drivers of the mighty 1205 could travel.

Horror came upon the man, horror as great as the unreasoning fury of a moment before. Too late he sprang forward with an inarticulate cry:

"Beth, come back! Come back!"

Madly he ran down the track in pursuit—ran until he could no longer hear the clamor of the engine, and knew that they were too far for recall or help; for now he heard the silvery whistle of the 1205 as she roared past some lonely crossing. Then he fell forward in the sand.

When he came to himself his head was pillowed in soft arms, and a wet cheek was pressed to his.

"Why, Beth," he murmured drowsily. "Time for my trick so soon? What are you crying about, kid?" Then realization came to him, and he sprang to his feet, thrusting her aside.

"Beth! Beth! Why did you turn to that hound? How are you back here, though? Do you think that I will take you back because he's dead? I killed him! I am a murderer—just when our skies were clearing, too!"

"Billy!" her voice rang clear. "Don't you dare think I threw myself on that car to be with him. I risked my life to save you from becoming a murderer. Before I had fairly closed the circuit after telling him to come tonight I was crazy with regret, and I was going to lose myself in the desert rather than go with him. I——"

His hand gripped her arm cruelly. "Did the 1205——?"

"No," she said softly. "He's alive. I caught the right lever, and when we stopped just in time I tipped the speeder, man and all, into the ditch. After that extra went by, I untied him, and he took the car and went on—alone."

"Come, Beth," said the man. "The dispatcher will be waiting for an 'os' of Extra 1205, and I want to show you those passes."

Next week's Out West story will be entitled, "A Quick-Fire Marriage." Don't miss it. You will find it entertaining.

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

There is no premium on food for thought these days.

Lots of fool men exchange single bliss for matrimonial blisters.

Man is made of dust—which explains why some men are always dry.

Many a man who has a way of his own has a wife who outweighs him.

Some men will do more for a cheap cigar than they will for a dollar.

Uncle Sam's ship of state may yet prove the Noah's ark of nations.

With all Europe mobilized, who will punch the holes in Swiss cheese?

Those who win success by practice haven't time to do much preaching.

Now it costs more to be sick because the prices of medicines are going up.

A woman in love is more or less foolish—but a man in love is always more.

We can see where the minority is in the right—when we are of the minority.

A desirable thing to know is how best to sweeten the bitters of life with mirth.

Cultivate the habit of listening, young man. It will come in handy if you ever acquire a wife.

Speaking of masterly strategy, there is the farmer who raises almost everything he needs.

Anyway, that peace congress scheduled for Vienna about this time should find plenty to do.

Making widows and orphans is not an industry of which any trade-seeking nation should boast.

Now the Panama Canal is ready for the world's business—provided the world's business is not war.

When a man says all he wants is justice it means that he wants the kind he wants when he wants it.

We say just as mean things about others as they do about us, but, of course, that is altogether different.

Experts are guided in their judgment of liquors by their sense of smell—those who taste are more or less misguided.

While the dogs of war are loose in Europe some of the hogs of war are busy in this country raising food prices.

We are admonished to look not upon the wine when it is red—yet one little cider apple did the world more harm than all the wine ever produced.

Europe's bottling works are running overtime. First to be bottled were American tourists, then the German fleet and finally the war news.

The Purple Princess.

(Continued from page six)

as she faced him, her blood showing through her silken skin and her pink nails buried in her tender palms.

"The heart of Eudora of Marx is her own!" she exclaimed. "She asks no one whom she may love. She is no man's slave. This castle is hers, the flag that flies above it was her father's, and it waved in battle whenever Germany called."

"I doubt not your father's loyalty," stammered Francis. "I know he struck for the realm whenever his blade and battleax were needed. But that does not wipe away the blood of Grimal nor abate my mission here."

"I am not in the market for imperial favors," said Eudora. "Had I been I would have fallen at your feet ere this."

She laid her hand on the doorknob and looked at him with a lofty scorn in her eyes.

"I will have no Empress but yourself," resumed the Emperor. "This is a royal command."

"And it is a refusal I hand you."

Snow was never whiter than was the face of Francis at that moment; he was biting his lips till a rivulet of crimson trickled over his chin; the lion spirit was back in his heart.

"First, ere you summon Dagobert to the hunt," cried he, "retract your words."

"I cannot, your majesty."

"You must!" He stamped heavily on the floor. "I cannot be disobeyed with impunity."

"I cannot retract. You don't know a woman's heart though you have long dealt with them."

"Was it the Black Friar who lowered my banner on the walls?"

"How should I know?"

"Was it by your orders?"

"How know you that the Black Friar lowered the flag?" she answered evasively. "He held you over the ramparts, you say?"

"I saw his cowl, and within it the devil orbs that shine in his head."

"Then we will find this man—if he exists."

"But you have not satisfied me. You will not become my Empress?"

"I will not."

"I can compel," thundered Francis. "All my subjects belong to me. My will is law."

"A law, then, which Eudora of Marx dares to disobey."

She was gone with the last word still trembling on her lips.

The Emperor drove the nails into his palms and cursed while he heard her flying feet on the stair.

"A pretty nest she has!" cried he, glancing round upon the elaborate furnishings of the chamber. "A nest fit for the bird I covet. By my life, this woman shall not escape me. I have set the net, and it shall catch its prey."

He went over to the table in the middle of the room and glanced at the many things that littered it. Suddenly he espied a miniature on ivory, and snatching it up, stared at the well-executed portrait.

"This must be the fly in the ointment," he said, in low tones. "This is the face of the man who would rob me of my bride."

It was indeed the portrait of Marc of Coblenz. Francis' lips seemed to join with a snap, his eyes got a baleful light, and with an oath the medallion was cast upon the table where it rang like a silver coin.

"What else is here to taunt me with his name?" cried Francis, looking once more at the things on the purple cloth. "Everything is purple here. There will be a purple face ere long if I have my way," and he turned away and walked over to the oriel window from which a view of the court was obtainable.

Looking downward he beheld Eudora among her retainers to whom she was talking in rapid strains.

"What an empress she will make," he murmured. "In all the world there is no fairer creature."

He saw the men of Marx scatter in many directions, and knew that they were obeying the Princess' commands.

"The search is intended to find no one," parted his lips. "The menials understand their mistress. I have roused the young lioness of Marx. I have stirred her blood in every vein. Why not withdraw till it cools down?"

A half-hour elapsed ere Eudora came back.

"The castle has been searched from turret to foundation," she said with a bow. "Every passage has been explored, but the Black Friar is not in the toils. I shall order your banner again to the turret. It shall float about my own——"

"Not now, at least," interrupted Francis. "I shall depart at once. I will take my dead with me, and woe to the band that slew!"

Eudora passed him and went over to the table where her gaze alighted upon a broken medallion which lay exposed. She glanced from it to the reddened face of the Emperor.

"I did it," cried Francis, divining her thoughts. "It was your Emperor and future husband who threw the image of Marc of Coblenz upon the table."

Her look was enough, but her lips did not separate.

"I am going now," he continued. "In less than ten minutes your castle shall not hold one of my minions. As for the man whom I would have treated as I treated his image, had he been here, let him keep far from the power of Francis of Germany. And if he escapes me and interferes with the royal match, he will curse the day his mother brought him into this world."

In another moment Francis was clattering down the staircase, and presently to Eudora's ears came the notes of a horn. She reached the casement in a single bound, and a smile wreathed her lips as she saw the imperial cavalcade ride out of Castle Marx.

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscripton, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

* * *

All That She Asked.

"Will you let me have my way in everything?" she asked.

"Of course I will, darling."

"Will you permit me to go home to mamma whenever I want to?"

"I should never think of being cruel enough to keep you away from your mother when you wished to see her."

"And may I have a regular allowance to spend just as I like?"

"Certainly. I shall be as liberal in that respect as possible."

"And you will not scold if I sometimes have my breakfast in bed?"

"Of course, I should prefer to have you sitting across the table from me at breakfast, but if you prefer to have it otherwise I shall not object."

"You are awfully nice, dear. And may I call you up on the 'phone whenever I wish to during business hours?"

"I should be unhappy if I did not hear your sweet voice every little while."

"I'm afraid you will forget your promises after we are married."

"No, I won't. Is there anything else you want me to promise?"

"I can't think of anything just now. Oh, yes. There is one other thing."

"What is it, sweetheart?"

"Will you promise not to be cross if I sometimes call you by the name of some one else that I have been engaged to? I'm so forgetful about such things."

* * *

Bad Judgment.

The other morning Mrs. Jones went to see her neighbor, Mrs. Smith. It was obvious that she was greatly upset about something.

"I'll have to get rid of Fido," she burst out. "He broke into the larder yesterday."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Smith, sympathetically, "Did he eat much?"

Mrs. Jones tried hard to speak calmly, while her eyes blazed with righteous wrath and burning indignation, as she replied:

"Every single thing except the dog biscuits!"

* * *

Left Little.

One morning, while Mrs. Cobb was at her summer home in the country, she decided to go uptown and spend the day with a friend. Her grocer had not called by the time she was ready to leave, so she wrote on a card:

"All out. Don't leave anything."

And tacked it on the door.

Upon her return at night she found the house had been ransacked and nearly everything of any value had been taken. On the card which she had left on the door these words had been added:

"Thanks. We haven't left much."

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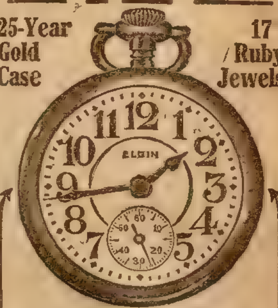

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The Young Guardsman

Or, Jack Winslow at Waterloo

By Captain Jack Judson

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CHAPTER IV.
THE OGRE OF HOUGOMONT.

AS THE sun of the 17th of June was declining towards the west the Life Guardsmen, to which division of the Duke of Wellington's great army Jack Winslow was attached, reached the Chateau of Hougomont.

The chateau itself was surrounded by gardens with walls, a number of offices, and near by was a wood destined erelong to see bloody work. The main building itself was very ancient and had many rooms and dark cellars. Many a dark legend was connected with the old place, and some of these had been drummed into the ears of the two boys by Old Moustache as the army approached it.

"They tell me that a great deal of treasure is buried somewhere about Hougomont," concluded the old veteran. "But there's no need of looking for it, for we are going to have our hands full of fight."

"Do you think we will meet Napoleon there?" queried Jack, anxiously.

"Somewhere in the neighborhood," was the reply. "The armies are almost equal. The great trouble is that the Little Corporal leads no men but Frenchmen, while we have a bad mixture of all nations. Then, Napoleon has staked everything on the coming battle, and if he wins he will once more be the master of the world."

"Then we must beat him off!" exclaimed Neville.

"To be sure we must, boy. You'll find Old Moustache doing his part," and the old fellow chuckled in his taking manner.

"Let's take a look at this old place," suggested Jack, when they had been installed at Hougomont. "I don't mean that we will look up the hidden treasure, but we may need to know our surroundings before the tussle comes."

"Agreed," returned Neville, and they proceeded into the chateau itself on a tour of inspection.

It was evening by now, and there were many shadows within the thick walls of the chateau which were being pierced by the soldiers for musketry. It was believed by the officers that Hougomont would be attacked by Napoleon, and Wellington had given orders that it must be defended to the last extremity.

"I'd like to see the underground places," remarked Jack. "But we must have lights for that purpose."

In one of the upper rooms several waxen candles were found, and having lit one, the chums proceeded down a flight of musty steps which seemed to lead into the very bowels of the earth.

"I doubt not that these old cells could tell many a harrowing tale if they could speak," Jack said, pausing in a narrow dungeon-like chamber around which flew a bevy of long-winged bats.

"This place gives me a chill," shuddered Neville.

"A good hiding place for spies," said Jack, sweeping his candle right and left.

At one end of the dismal place they found a door, which they opened with some difficulty, and the puff of air that struck their faces almost extinguished their light.

"Did you shut the door?" asked Neville, when they were inside the new chamber.

"I did not."

"Well, it is shut, and I thought I heard the click of a lock."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Jack, turning around. "The wind must have swung the door to."

He laid his hand on the rusty latch and pulled back with all his might, but the portal was as unyielding as one of adamant.

"This is strange," the young Guardsman ejaculated.

"I was quite sure I heard the click."

Neville now went to his companion's assistance, but they both tugged in vain.

"What if we have been cooped up in this horrid place?" Jack suddenly cried. "There may be a labyrinth of subterranean passages here and each lead to new dangers."

"That is true," was the reply. "These walls are so thick that no voice can penetrate them, and——"

"We won't waste our breath then," grimly smiled Jack. "We will go forward till we find a way out, for there must be a way."

A gloomy passage led from the chamber in which they now were, and they were soon traversing it, the light flickering as they advanced.

"Stop!" suddenly cried Neville. "Some one has been here lately."

"How can you tell?"

"Look at the dust on the floor."

Jack lowered his light and gave vent to an exclamation of astonishment. Sure enough there was a footprint before them. The two boys exchanged glances of silent wonder.

"It is a man's track! Jack said, breaking the silence. "Can it be that one of our men has preceded us?"

"I don't know. Some soldiers are always after loot. It is possible that we will soon have a companion in misery."

The ramifications of the underground corridors simply amazed the young adventurers. Their wonder increased as they advanced.

"This would be a good place to hide treasure," said Jack, recurring to Old Moustache's story of buried wealth.

"And a fine living tomb," suggested Neville.

They had proceeded but a little farther when both halted as though they had been commanded to. A figure had suddenly risen in their path.

Both boys involuntarily reached for their pistols, but the next second they were confronted by a weapon of the same kind. There was a pair of blazing eyes behind it.

"Halt!" said a startling voice. "I guess I hold the winning hand just now."

It was an uncouth-looking man who spoke thus, a tall fellow who had eyes like a hyena, and whose mien boded the young Guardsmen no good.

"What are you doing here?" he proceeded, as his eyes dropped, to a level with the extended weapon. "If you make a single movement I'll give both of you your everlasting discharge."

"Who are you?" ventured Jack.

"I am the ogre of Hougomont."

"Well, I must say you look it!"

"Come, no frivolity!" hissed the man with the pistol. "You belong to the hated English?"

"We are of the Duke's army, as you can see by our uniforms."

"So you've come here to fight?"

"Yes."

"I don't think you laddies will do much of that," grinned the Unknown. "Every door is locked behind you. I need company."

What could the boys say? Jack thought of rushing forward and knocking the pistol aside, but when he again looked into those terrible eyes the idea quickly vanished. Somehow or other, he thought, *they* must get rid of this obstruction, but how?

"Are you after the treasure?" suddenly resumed the man with baleful orbs.

"We are after nothing," answered Jack. "We were just on a tour of inspection and——"

"That doesn't go down very well," interjected the other. "You had no right to invade my domain. I permit no intrusion."

"Then we will go back——"

"And let a whole swarm of redcoats in here? I reckon not!" and the finger at the trigger seemed to move a little.

"Stand over there against the wall," commanded the man. "Don't blow out your light, for I can shoot in the dark."

Jack, who was on the eve of extinguishing the candle, desisted.

"There you are," continued the Unknown, as the boys arranged themselves against the sweating wall. "What elegant targets you make." He was grinning like a fiend. "I like to shoot at redcoats. Of course, I can't miss you."

It was a moment of the direst peril. The young Britons felt their hearts in their throats.

"We have friends nearer than you think," said Jack, voicing the idea that suddenly took possession of his brain.

"What's that? Friends, you say?" grimaced the man.

"Yes, and good ones, too. Take him there, Captain!"

Thrown off his guard by these words, the man turned his head, when with a bound Jack threw himself forward and landed squarely upon him.

The leveled pistol was discharged, and the ball whistled past Neville's head. The fellow struggled with all his strength, but Neville leaped to Jack's assistance, and even then the boys found that they had met their match.

When the battle ended the foaming wretch lay on the stones panting like a wild beast, and the boys stood gloatingly over him.

"Well, what have you gained?" he cried. "You have overcome me, but you are still prisoners."

"But we will find a way out."

"Try it," laughed the man. "Just try to get out of this trap, and see where you land."

There was something in the words that made the boys' blood run cold.

"I know every crook and turn in old Hougomont," chuckled the ogreish rascal. "This place is to be your living tomb, my hearties, and the Iron Duke will look in vain for his young scamps. I'll be doing the Little Corporal a service, ha! ha! for this cage is going to hold you forever."

CHAPTER V.
THE FRINGE OF HOPE.

"HE laughs best who laughs last," grimly said Jack, as he covered the discomfited yet boastful man with his pistol. "We are not going to be kept here. There is a passage behind you. Make the least stir, and I will send a bullet to your brain."

The reply was a fiendish smile.

"Forward," the young aide said to Neville. "We will see if this labyrinth of darkness is to hold us forever," and they advanced to the opening of another corridor, into which they boldly plunged.

"There must be more than one way out," persisted our young Guardsman. If we remain here long we will miss the opening of the great battle."

The ground beneath the old chateau seemed to be a veritable honeycomb of mysteries. The presence of the man with the pistol deterred them from retracing their steps, and there was nothing left for them but to go forward and take their chances.

"This seems to be the end of the trails," said Jack, turning at last to his friend as a solid wall confronted them.

"Alas! it seems so."

Jack held his light close to the gray wall and examined it with all eyes.

"There's not a break nor a crack in it," said he, dolefully.

"But here are footprints in the dust," hopefully exclaimed Neville. "Some one has been here, perhaps our old enemy. Look closely, Jack."

"Ah, here is a square crack in the floor!"

"I hoped as much. It is a trapdoor."

By dint of toil the boys succeeded in moving a stone at their feet, disclosing a dark descent which they hesitated to try.

"It is this or nothing," Jack cried. "Whether it leads to doom or safety, we must try it."

They lowered themselves into the dismal place, alighting on soft ground. In another moment they were threading a narrow passage with their pistols ready for any emergency.

"Look! a star," suddenly cried Neville, and at the same time Jack noticed the beacon in the sky.

"Hurrah! we are out!" cried he, and they emerged from the chambers of mystery with grateful hearts.

But the peril was not yet over. Scarcely had they found themselves underneath the vaulted heavens than they drew back, touching one another while they gazed at several figures a few feet away.

"Our men, I hope," whispered Neville.

Jack leaned forward with his finger at the trigger.

"No, they are not of ours," said he, in a low voice. "Their language is not English."

"Napoleon's spies, then."

"That is to be determined."

Until now they had not been seen by the men whom they had discovered, but all at once one of the fellows came toward them and halted in their front.

"Not a word," cried he, at the same time throwing up his hand which gripped a pistol. "It is worth your lives to make a single sound."

The tables had been so quickly turned on the boys as to take their breath. They had again fallen into the enemy's hands.

Both of them were disarmed without ceremony, and the leader of the group turned to his companions with a savage leer.

"This is luck, my lads," said he. "We have done fine work tonight. Now we will get back to the old lines."

These words smote upon Jack's ears like a sentence of doom.

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"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Not of the Duke's army, you may be sure," was the reply. "We are Marshal Ney's scouts.

"And inside our lines?"

"That's exactly where we are," was the laughing retort. "We hardly expected to have luck like this."

The boys were dumfounded. To be captured within their own lines and just when they were congratulating themselves upon their safety, was a terrible misadventure.

"We'll show you something of our army," continued the head of the little band. "If you don't get to see the Little Corporal himself, you will at least have the pleasure of an interview with Marshal Ney."

Jack and Neville were conducted from the scene of their capture and taken by a roundabout way into the ranks of the French army.

"Keep up your courage," Jack whispered to the silent Neville. "I am sure fortune will yet favor us."

Neville was not so confident as his looks showed.

That portion of the Emperor's army was in camp ready for the mighty conflict, and as the boys looked upon the handsome uniforms on every side, they could but admire them, for they were different from any they had ever seen.

The watchfires which stretched into the endless distance were a sight worth seeing, and the young soldiers gazed at them wrapped in utter amazement.

"Take them over yonder," said a French officer to their captors, as he pointed to the left. "You will find the Marshal there."

In a few moments the boys were taken into the presence of a splendid-looking man who gazed at them in silence.

"Who are these boys?" he asked, after they had been scrutinized from head to foot.

"Young Englishmen," was the rejoinder. "We chanced upon them inside the enemy's lines——"

"A gallant feat," interrupted Marshal Ney. "It must be reported to the Emperor."

The greatest marshal of France folded his arms on his chest and turned again to the captives.

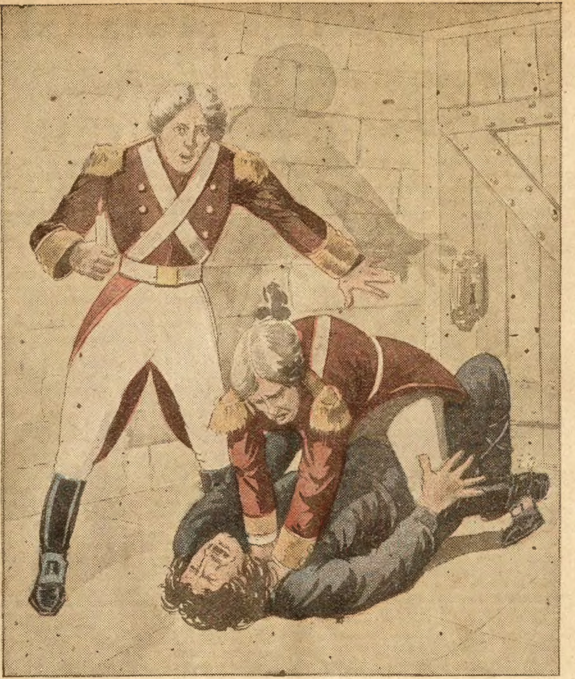
"So you walked into the trap?" he said, a smile beginning to play on his lips.

"We were just escaping from the underground dungeons of Hougomont," answered Jack.

"So?"

Ney was about to continue when another figure approached, a little man with a cocked hat and a gray surtout. An army cloak hung lightly over his shoulders. It was Napoleon. He looked at Ney, and then fastened his eagle eyes upon the two boys.

The French Emperor, after his usual habit, took a pinch of snuff and approached Jack.



Jack threw himself squarely upon him.

"I am glad to see you, young sirs," said he, dropping his French. "You really look like good soldiers."

This little flattery made the boys smile.

"What force holds Hougomont?" Bonaparte inquired.

Jack felt his nerves tingle.

"You forget," said he, meeting Napoleon's look with calmness, "that we are serving our King."

The great Emperor's brows contracted.

"Then, sirs, you do not wish to give the desired information?"

"We do not."

This scene had attracted the attention of a good many soldiers who had gathered on the spot.

All at once Jack gave a start, for he had caught sight of a young girl at whose side swung a canteen. She was dressed in the French colors, and looked jaunty enough in them.

Jack nudged Neville, thus calling his attention to the girl. One look was sufficient. It was Trix, the girl whom they had encountered in the Forest of Soignes, after they had freed themselves in the old hut where they had been caught and bound by the robbers of the wood.

She had told them that she hated the French, yet here she was arrayed in their uniform, and was serving the Emperor. What did it mean?

Trix seemed to avoid their gaze, although it was evident that she was taking great interest in the proceedings.

Napoleon suddenly turned on his heel and walked away.

"Take them away," said Marshal Ney, with a gesture. "See that they do not get back to their lines."

The boys were escorted from the spot and taken over to a campfire where they were closely watched.

"At any rate, we have seen the great Napoleon," said Jack, at the first opportunity, to Neville. "But what is Trix doing here?"

Neville shook his head.

Blankets were spread on the ground for the young prisoners, and they threw themselves upon them, but it was not to sleep.

Gradually the vast camp became silent. The stars shone with unwonted brilliancy in the heavens, and everywhere lay the men who were to fight and die on the morrow.

Jack's gaze was wandering down the line of fires when he saw a girlish figure stealing toward them. The dying lights revealed her ghostlike figure, and he held his breath as it came forward. Trix stopped within a few feet of them.

"What will she do?" thought the watchful Jack. "Dare she do anything for us, even if she would?"

The next moment he almost leaped to his feet. A soldier who had been watching the girl sprang up and darted toward her.

"Go back!" he hissed, as he seized Trix by the arm. "This is no place for you, girl. What brought you hither?" and he pushed her away with an oath, and Jack saw her vanish.

His heart, which had begun to beat with hope, dropped to immeasurable depths in his bosom.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RIDE FOR LIFE.

AFTER this episode it was impossible for Jack to compose himself to sleep. He was certain that the girl Trix intended to rescue them from their perilous situation, but the French soldier had interfered at the crucial moment.

However, he imagined Trix would not give over her intentions, but would wait for another opportunity, and therefore, without waking Neville, who had dropped off into slumber, he resolved to keep on the watch.

One by one the watches of the Grand Army fell asleep. The campfires burned low and at last but a few dim embers were left.

If the two young Guardsmen could have walked through the vast camps about them they would have beheld a wonderful sight. More than seventy thousand Frenchmen were resting before the great battle upon which hung the fate of Europe. Bonaparte was still the idol of his men; they had never forgotten the battles in which he had led them, and all were eager to marshal once more under his victorious eagles. On the other hand, the enemy had come to meet him with a force about equal to his own. Both armies were resting within cannon shot of each other, and the stars shone on many hundreds of brave men who would soon sleep the endless sleep of death.

Jack did not grow tired of watching for Trix's return, despite the drowsiness which tried to capture his senses. He felt that he had not seen the young vivandiere for the last time. Surely she would return, and then——

He checked his thoughts, for he perceived a figure advancing toward him. The night was far advanced, and the stars of morning would soon glow in the heavens. He did not remove his gaze from the figure until it knelt at his side. Jack held his breath.

"No noise," whispered the girl. "Everything depends on silence and swiftness."

Jack nodded.

"Your friend is asleep?" smiled Trix.

The young Guardsman nudged Neville, and clasped his wrist in the interests of silence. Of course Neville understood.

The boys arose and swiftly followed the girl. Sleeping forms lay everywhere. The slightest noise would betray them and bring the rescue to naught.

Not far from the scene stood a small grove of trees. It was unoccupied, and the starlight sifted through the leafy branches.

"Here are horses," said Trix, pointing to two steeds that were tethered to one of the trees. "And here are pistols."

The youths looked at her, unable to speak from gratitude.

"Ride to the left," she continued. "I haven't forgotten the Forest of Soignes."

There was a smile on her lips.

"Over yonder is the Young Guard, and farther on the cuirassiers are encamped. There is a narrow passage between. It leads to Hougomont. You must run the living gantlet."

"We'll do it," said Jack, determinedly.

"Good luck go with you!"

"But you?" asked Jack, looking at the girl.

"Fear not for Trix," was the reply. "I like adventure and——"

"But if you are suspected?——"

"I have this," was the answer, as she touched a pistol in her belt. "I fancy no one will care to face it in my hands, not even Max Moritz."

"What, is that rascal here?"

"He is now with the army, after playing spy in Brussels. He serves Napoleon with the faithfulness of a hound. But you must hasten. Morning will soon break, and then it will be too late."

Jack and Neville sprang to horse and seated themselves firmly in the saddles.

"We'll pay this debt of gratitude some time," Jack said, bending toward Trix. "We——"

"I am already paid," was the interruption. "Go! Take the narrow road. At the end of it is Hougomont."

With a final look at their deliverer the boys rode away and made for the designated lane.

Already from the left came sounds which told them that a part of the army was wakening from its sleep. There was the long roll of a drum, and then a trumpet added to the stir.

"Straight ahead," Neville said, in low tones. "This way is fringed with dangers. Once at the end we will be safe."

The long rolls became more frequent. The whole air trembled with them.

"Faster!" said Jack. "This is ticklish business."

They spoke lightly to the horses, which seemed to understand the situation.

It was little more than a mile to the allied army, so close were the combatants to one another, and every foot of the ground was a death-lined space. The boys set their lips hard.

At length they felt that they could see safety near. At that moment forms seemed to rise from the earth on each side of them. A drum that was not more than ten rods away sounded the morning roll.

Men sprang up and began to look for their muskets. Everywhere soldiers were shaking off the mantle of sleep.

"Quick!" cried Jack. "The jaws will close upon us in a moment."

Away they went, the horses seeming to spurn the ground as they dashed on.

"Halt!" rang out a dozen voices.

"On! On!" responded Jack, as he drew

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his pistol and gripped it in grim determination.

They rode into the lines of the cuirassiers, only to see them springing to their horses, some of the men but half awake, but all under the spell of war. One fellow who seemed to take in the situation sprang at Neville's bridle rein, but the boy shook him off and saw him tumble to the ground.

It was now a race for life. On every side sounded commands, loud cries of pursuit, and the never-to-be-forgotten rattle of the alarm drums.

The boys fell forward on their horses' necks and rode like the wind. There was a patter of hoofs behind them. It seemed as though the whole array of cavalry was in hot pursuit. Jack wondered why they did not open fire.

Just then a volley shook the ground behind them. A storm of bullets whistled about their heads. Neville was a trifle in the advance, riding at full speed, with his hand gripping the rein and his heart in his throat. Suddenly his horse stumbled and fell. Neville rolled away and tried to rise. Jack drew rein and then leaped from the saddle.

"Go on, Jack," said Neville, gazing up at his friend with the whitest of faces. "My horse is dead, and the rascals have winged me."

"What, desert you, Neville? Never!" was the heroic response. "We will share together whatever fate has in store for us."

"But they dare not take my life," Neville pleaded.

"These French rascals will dare anything. Get up on my horse. He will carry double," and Jack dragged his companion forward and lifted him from the ground.

"They'll be upon us in a moment," he went on. "The whole line seems to be thundering behind us."

With this Jack himself leaped to saddle and bade Neville hold fast as he shouted to the animal.

The strong-limbed horse appeared to be endowed with superhuman powers. He stretched away despite his double burden, but for all this he could not outdistance the singing bullets.

They were near the British pickets now. In the east the glow of morning was reddening the horizon. There was a scent of clover on the air. Jack dared not look back. The sounds that assailed his ears told the fearful story of continued pursuit.

"Drop me, Jack, and escape yourself," cried Neville. "My shoe is full of blood——"

"We escape or die together!" was the magnanimous interruption.

"There are but two of them in sight now," said Neville, a second later. "What a pity that I have lost my pistol."

Jack grated his teeth and looked over his shoulder. Sure enough, but two of the enemy still rode behind them, and they were so near that their swarthy faces could be plainly seen. On, on they came, half standing in their stirrups, with sabers drawn.

Jack let the reins fall loose on the horse's neck.

"Surrender!" cried one of the cuirassiers. "Surrender, or we'll lop your head!"

There was no reply to this threat. Jack turned halfway round and glared at the uniformed riders.

He heard the hot panting of their steeds, and then as one came alongside, swearing desperately in French, he poked the pistol into his face and fired. The man dropped his saber and fell heavily to the ground.

"I have you now!" laughed the other. "Here goes your head——"

The exultant sentence was never finished, for Jack's empty pistol landed squarely in his face, and he toppled from his seat.

"Now for Hougomont!" shouted the young Guardsman, and the horse, as though suddenly armed with new strength, seemed a flying shaft in the morning light.

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"And wasna I here on Monday nicht?"

"Aye, so ye were."

"And I was here on Tuesday nicht?"

"Aye, ye did happen here on Tuesday nicht."

"And I was here on Wednesday nicht?"

"Aye, so ye were, Jock; so ye were."

"And I was here on Thursday nicht?"

"I'll no deny that ye were, Jock.

"And I was here on Friday nicht?"

"Aye, I'm thinking that's so."

"Aye, this is Saturday nicht, and I'm here again?"

"Weel, what for no'? Ye are vera welcome."

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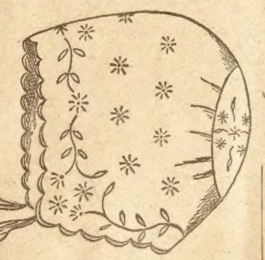

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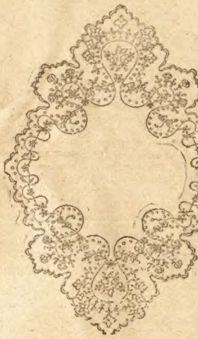

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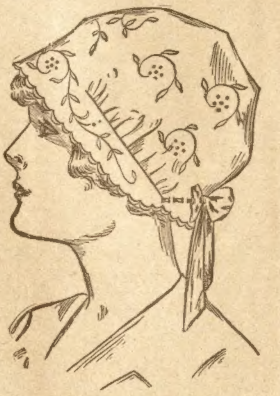
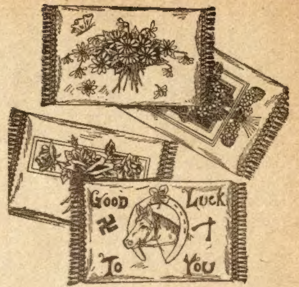


No. 159, Boudoir or Breakfast Cap.

NO. 159, BOUDOIR OR BREAKFAST CAP.—This neat, useful boudoir or breakfast cap is to be worked in solid, outline, and buttonhole embroidery. Same comes stamped on fine quality linen finished lawn, including necessary colored cotton for working. Given free with a $1.00 year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger.



No. 147, Four Pillow Tops.

NO. 147, FOUR PILLOW TOPS.—Each of these pillow tops is stamped and tinted on tan art ticking, size 17x21 inches, and includes back and embroidery cotton to outline design. Any one of these pillow tops should be ordered as follows: A, daisy design; B, violet design; C, rose design; D, good luck design. You can obtain any one of these pillow tops by sending $1.00 for a year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger, or your choice of two of them for a $2.00 subscription to the Blade and the Ledger. (Fringe not supplied.)

* * *

His Message.

The Rev. Dr. Jordan was anxious about his son's college examination and requested him to telegraph the result. The boy sent the following telegram:

"Hymn 342, fifth verse, last two lines."

Looking it up, the father found the words:

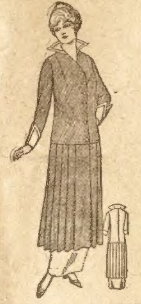
"Sorrow vanquished, labor ended, Jordan passed."

PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

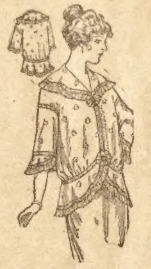
Hundreds of Patterns to Select From

The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

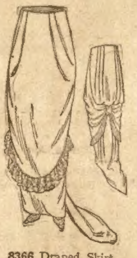
We make a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. **Read our splendid offer below.**



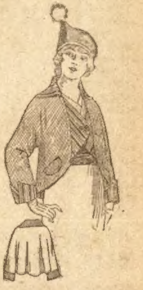
8344A Basque with Tunic, 34 to 42 bust.



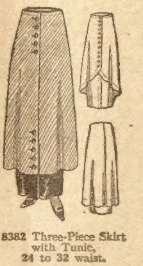
8368 House Jacket, 34 to 44 bust.



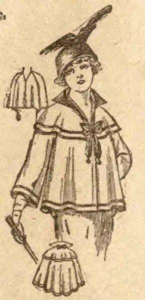
8366 Draped Skirt, 24 to 32 waist.



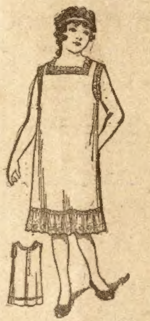
8373 Short Coat for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



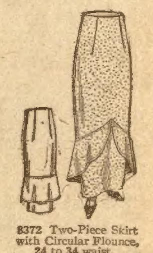
8382 Three-Piece Skirt with Tunic, 24 to 32 waist.



8362 Cape Coat, 34 to 42 bust.



8374 Girl's Princesse Slip, 8 to 14 years.



8372 Two-Piece Skirt with Circular Flounce, 24 to 34 waist.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it. To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber, send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

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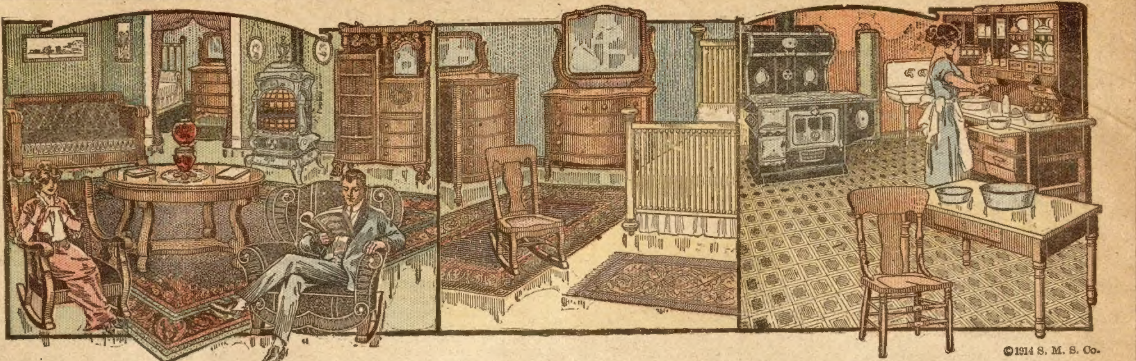
If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number.) **Coupons good for six months.**



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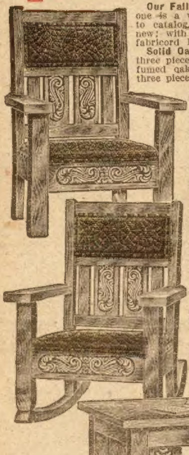


Our Fall Catalog is full of bargains, but this one is a wonder and there were not enough to catalog. The mission design is entirely new; with rich carvings and brown Spanish fabricord leather in seats and backs.

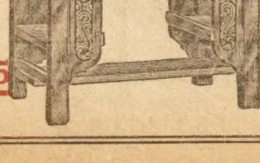
Solid Oak of selected quality is used in all three pieces. Dull finished in rich nut brown fumed oak. Notice the rich carvings on all three pieces. **Table** is a real Arts and Crafts design. Top measures 34 inches long and 24 inches wide; is supported with deep box rim, heavy legs, heavy undershelf and cross stretchers. Table is fitted with handy book racks on both sides. Inclosing these book racks are beautifully shaped carved panels. Book shelves within measure 13 inches long and 17 inches wide.

Arm Chair stands 39½ inches high, is solid oak with fumed finish and the artistic back is 22 inches high. Upper portion of back is handsomely upholstered in brown Spanish fabricord leather and is strongly supported with four artistic panels, the center two being decorated with a wealth of deep carvings. The seat is large and roomy, is 18 inches deep and 21 inches wide, and is upholstered over a full set of guaranteed oil-tempered springs.

Brown Spanish Fabricord Leather matches the rich fumed oak finish beautifully and will not crack or peel.

Arm Rocker is in exact keeping with the arm chair in every detail. Shipping weight, entire set, 125 lbs.

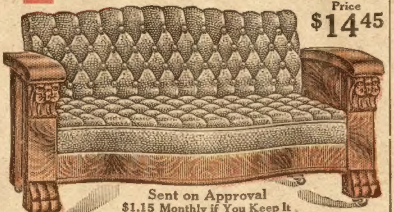
No. 22E4B105. Price, table, rocker, arm chair.. $9.95



Price $9.95

$2.00 Brings You This Fine Davenport Sofa Bed!

Price $14.45



Sent on Approval
$1.15 Monthly if You Keep It

Will Ship on Approval, but order right from this paper to get this bargain. By simply raising the seat, the back automatically drops and davenport is changed into a broad, comfortable bed, and it is just as easily changed back into a parlor davenport. If you keep this bed, you pay only $1.15 monthly.

Heavy Solid Oak Frame, finished in a rich golden shade. Design is new and pretty, with shapely serpentine front rail, carved massive front posts decorated with deep hand-carved dragon heads and supporting full curved broad arms. The side panels are heavy. Cabinet work is of high standard throughout.

Black Fabricord Leather, guaranteed for long wear, is used in seat and back, and both are deeply diamond tufted. Upholstering is high quality over 35 carbon springs, firmly braced to prevent sagging. Under the seat is a large wardrobe for bed clothes. Is 72 inches long between arms and 44 inches wide. Shipping weight, 200 lbs.

No. 28E4B188. Price........................ $14.45

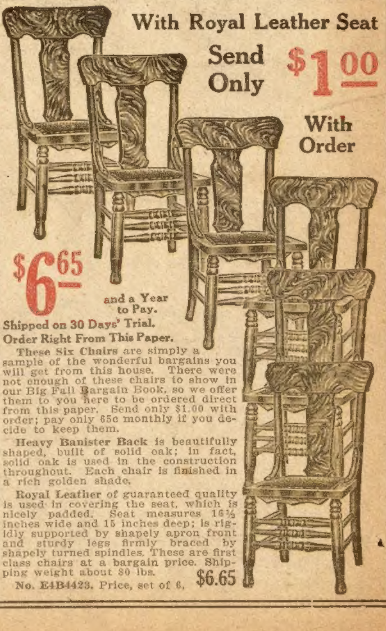
Spiegel, May, Stern Co

1495 W. 35th Street, Chicago

Six Solid Oak Chairs

With Royal Leather Seat

Send Only $1.00 With Order



$6.65 and a Year to Pay.

Shipped on 30 Days' Trial.
Order Right From This Paper.

These Six Chairs are simply a sample of the wonderful bargains you will get from this house. There were not enough of these chairs to show in our Big Fall Bargain Book, so we offer them to you here to be ordered direct from this paper. Send only $1.00 with order; pay only 65c monthly if you decide to keep them.

Heavy Banister Back is beautifully shaped, built of solid oak; in fact, solid oak is used in the construction throughout. Each chair is finished in a rich golden shade.

Royal Leather of guaranteed quality is used in covering the seat, which is nicely padded. Seat measures 16½ inches wide and 15 inches deep; is rigidly supported by shapely apron front and sturdy legs firmly braced by shapely turned spindles. These are first class chairs at a bargain price. Shipping weight about 80 lbs.

No. E4B4423. Price, set of 6, $6.65